

THE SOUL
OF
ABE
LINCOLN

BERNIE
BABCOCK

BOOKS PERPETUATE
AND RECORD
THE PROGRESS
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THE SOUL OF ABE LINCOLN

SECOND IMPRESSION

BERNIE BABCOCK

THE SOUL OF ANN RUTLEDGE

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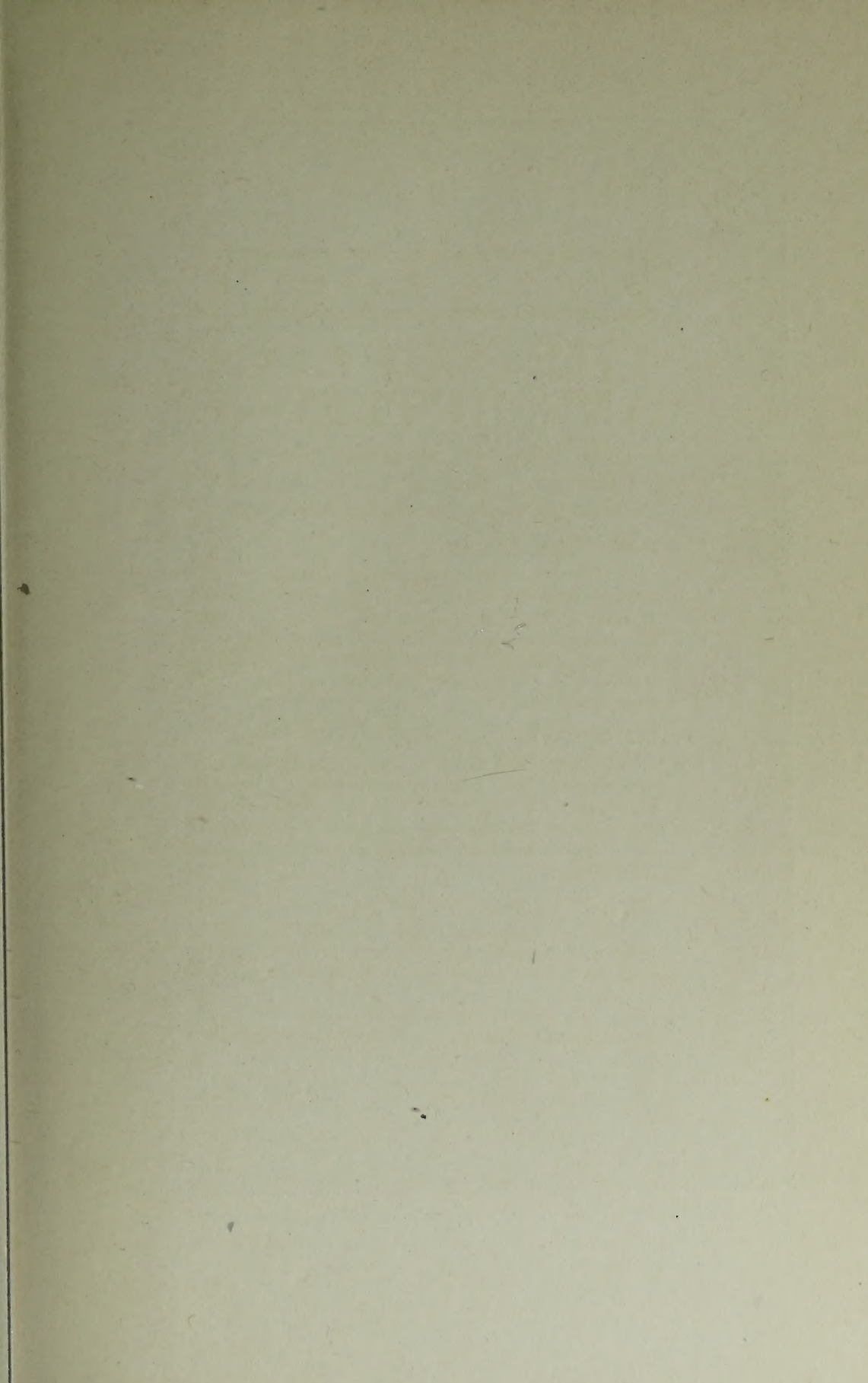
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SEVEN LARGE IMPRESSIONS





"YOU WILL FIND HIM? YOU, THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES!"

THE SOUL OF ABE LINCOLN

BY

BERNIE BABCOCK

AUTHOR OF "THE SOUL OF ANN RUTLEDGE."

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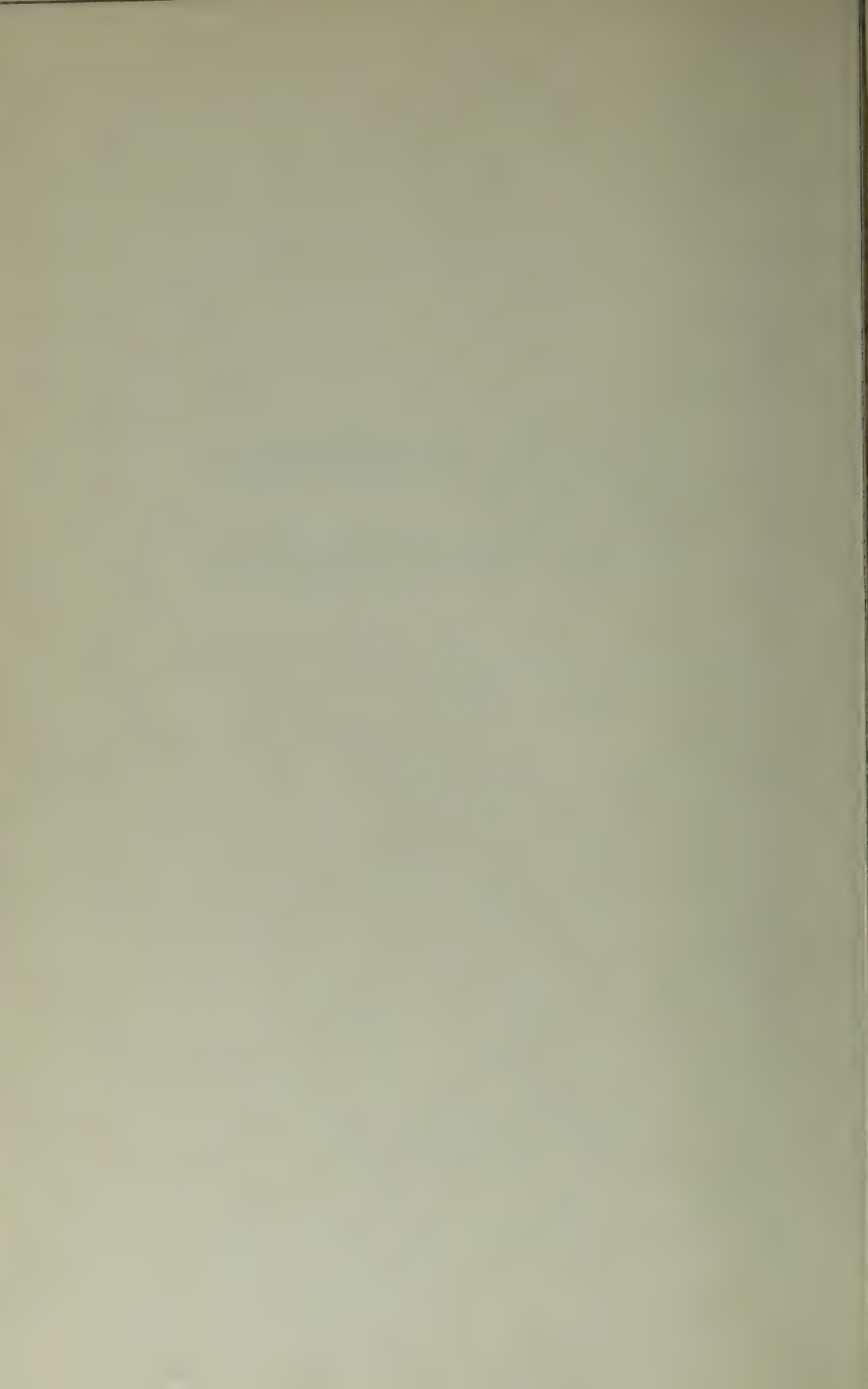
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"Gentlemen, hear me ! Generations will come and go before the soul of this arch foe of peace in our Republic—the soul of Abe Lincoln, attains its majority dimensions!"

"Prophet as well as jurist," Senator Thompson laughed as he watched a ring of smoke circle itself into dissolution over the head of Judge Laury.

2893



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THE SOUL OF ABE LINCOLN

CHAPTER I

ANN LEUIN LAURY

“ EL CAPITAN! And hurry! ”

The slave boy at the foot of the broad porch steps bowed low to the beautiful young woman above him and was away to the stables.

“ Ann Leuin.”

Turning, the girl found she was not the only early riser at the big house. Beside a small table with glasses, her father sat with his friend and guest James Honeycutt.

“ Do you think to overtake two such horsemen as have given you the slip?” Judge Laury asked. “ Gus *rides* you know, and Norcrosse, ah, *he* also *rides*. Their horses are fresh and they run to see the sunrise over the river at Vicksburg.”

“ So do I ride! So is *my* horse fresh! So am I—so is the whole world fresh and splendid and I am eighteen and you are giving me the loveliest party ever dreamed of—and I am going to run away from my sleeping guests and ride—and ride—and ride into the very face of the rising sun!” And tossing back a mass of gold curls, Ann Leuin danced to her father, threw her arms around his neck, pulled his ears and taking his head between her hands, shook it savagely and kissed him.

“ Birthday favors, eh?” Honeycutt asked. “ How about passing them?”

The next instant Ann Leuin’s arms were around the neck of her father’s somewhat surprised guest. He felt

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the print of her lips first on one cheek and then the other, on his forehead—then his ears were being pulled.

“ All right,” Judge Laury said laughing heartily, “ but don’t extend the courtesy to the young men of the party. And before you go bring in some fresh mint for the julep we old cronies must have to swear eternal friendship over. There’s magic in her fingers,” he explained to Honeycutt.

“ A good way to get mint,” Ann Leuin laughed as she turned to the steps.

She was yet crushing the fragrant leaves in the glass while her father poured from a dusty bottle, when El Capitan was announced.

For a moment before mounting, Ann Leuin stopped beside her thoroughbred, spoke to him, put her hand under his nose and lay her cheek against his—then by a quick and dexterous movement she was on his back.

“ Watch her ride,” her father said, smiling. “ She’ll catch the boys yet.”

“ If she don’t break her neck,” Honeycutt added.

The eyes of the two men followed horse and rider until they were lost behind intervening trees.

“ There’s something I don’t understand,” Dr. Honeycutt said.

“ For instance?”

“ How a beautiful doll like that can ride a horse—like that.”

“ She looks like a doll, you think?”

“ A doll. Pink cheeks, blue eyes—sea-blue eyes, and dimples soft as if an angel had sucked its breath in after kissing her. Her mouth—well, I can’t say her mouth is like a doll’s. There’s too much of it and it’s not shaped like a cherry. But her hair—gold-yellow—and doll curly.”

“ Yes—I have never allowed her to wear her hair in a net. I like it better little-girl fashion and she does not mind. About the dimple—well there are things I don’t understand about dolls either. That dimple, Honey, may look like the imprint of an angel’s kiss—but it isn’t.

ANN LEUIN LAURY

When that girl of mine gets her head set, she's anything but angelic—she's set—set as — ”

“Her father,” said Honeycutt. “Do you know, one reason your friendship has always meant so much to me is because you *are* set in your ways. It means something to know where a man stands, even if you don't agree with him. Do you remember our first disagreement? ”

For some time, which slipped away unaccounted, the two friends lived over old days before Honeycutt said, “But beware! If you would preserve friendship, don't let that girl of yours marry another than my Del Norcrosse. I understand Bresler of Mobile and your Baltimore guest are victims of Cupid's shafts shot from her direction.”

“Don't *let* her,” Judge Laury remarked dryly. “This brings us back to the dimple—that angel kiss. That dimple seems to be a sort of barometer to the more or less static condition of her jaw.”

“Jaw? ”

“Yes—plain old ‘jaw.’ One who knows her as well as her father and her horse, knows the dimple is an indication. Its pink and silk-soft bottom seems to be underwoven with invisible threads which, when she sets her jaw, pucker. By this sign her father knows there is a struggle ahead and El Capitan knows it is time to obey. However, you will admit after looking the beauties over tonight at the ball that when the newspapers say the daughter of Judge Reagan Laury is the belle of Mississippi, they speak God's truth.”

Honeycutt took a few sips from his glass before saying, “I believe it—and more. You have an unusual son too; he has a future.”

“Future? Indeed my son Gus has! We have great plans for the son. He is to be a statesman after his education has been finished at home and abroad.”

“And do your plans suit him? I made plans for my boy which he pushed aside as he might have done a straw house. He's all I have—my only sister's only son. From his English father he got an inheritance. When his mother

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died he had another. With two fortunes, wouldn't you think he'd make a good lawyer? But no. He wants to be an engineer like Robert E. Lee of our own state who is something of an expert on coast defenses, you know. Ah, well, the boy has good blood in his veins and I guess it will show up wherever he turns his energy. Where did you get this?" and Honeycutt poured from the bottle.

"Where I got my own horse and El Capitan."

"Horses, wine and women—your wife from Kentucky too?"

"No, South Carolina, but I found her visiting in a small town not far from Montreal—a French Catholic settlement. Her sister is of that faith and under the spell of a priest named Chiniquy she nearly became a convert."

"Chiniquy? A temperance lecturer?"

"Yes—quite a famous lecturer."

"And deservedly. I have heard him."

"It was not his views on temperance that won the heart of my wife, Miss Leuin then. She likened him to a shepherd of a devoted flock. She quotes him yet. I think Ann Leuin knows one of his sermons by heart. He finally took a large French colony to Illinois where he founded a settlement. Must be an unusual character."

"Yes, a big character. Still I don't agree with him that drunkenness accounts in any large measure for the wide-spread social unrest and growing criminal tendencies of today. What's the matter with Mexico? What's the matter with Ireland? What's the matter with half the countries of Europe? What's stirring below the surface in our own country trying to get up a fight? Not drunkenness. I'll tell you! I'll tell you! There's a great conspiracy! A conspiracy of international significance, conceived and born for the purpose of cutting off the head of liberty wherever it shall show itself above the mire of Monarchy! The stink of it rises to heaven and it *smells like Austria*."

"Smells like Austria? What?"

ANN LEUIN LAURY

“ That’s what I said, for so far as I have been able to unearth, the first written declaration against Democracy comes through Metternich of Austria in the— ”

A wild, glad shout from behind the screen of tree boughs put an end to the conversation. The next moment Ann Leuin dashed into view riding like mad. The gold of her unbound hair fanned like a disturbed halo above the black of her habit and horse, and the flutter of her skirt was like that of a butterfly’s wing in the wind.

“ I’m racing! ” she shouted. “ Racing. ”

“ Who with? ” her father shouted back.

“ Gus and Del Norcrosse. ”

“ Where are they? ”

“ Coming! ‘ But they have fleet steeds that follow’ quoth young Lockinvar. ”

“ How does she do it—stick on sideways like that? ” Honeycutt asked.

“ Came into the world that way I guess, ” the Judge answered. “ Her mother dreamed of riding eagles before her birth. ”

A shower of pebbles announced El Capitan’s arrival at the gate. A moment later Gus and Norcrosse came dashing in.

“ It was Norcrosse who assisted Ann Leuin to dismount. In the moment he lifted her to the ground, Bresler the Mobile guest, looked down from an upper window.

“ Ann Leuin Laury! ” he exclaimed with the first half of a breath, the last half of which was, “ Damn him! ”

CHAPTER II

MAMMY

It was at the mint bed Mammy, easily the most important and privileged of the thousand slaves on the big Mississippi plantation, found Ann Leuin on her birthday morning.

Before the mellow of the sun's awakening was yet flushed with rose, the old slave, in bright cotton dress, spotless apron and high-wrapped turban, walked where the figs grew and culled the choicest fruit.

Leaving her basket of fruit in the mint bed, Mammy walked to the kitchen where preparations for the day had already begun.

On a cleanly swept spot of earth under a spreading mulberry a negress sat picking a pile of freshly killed dominique friers. Mosey, a small and wiry mulatto boy with twisted ankles, had been assigned the important task of keeping the hounds away and these he whacked with a long stick, roaring with pleasure at each blow.

On a wooden bench in front of the kitchen three small negroes scraped corn, peeled peaches and strung beans.

With her black hands spread above her hips Mammy paused here to inspect proceedings. As she stood, Mosey grew so interested in mimicking her he forgot the hounds until she turned upon him. He in turn made a dash at the hounds sniffing around the tub of feathers. This sudden onslaught caused a counter dash by the dogs against the crooked legs of Mosey, which threw him head first into the tub.

Before he had extricated his head Mammy was upon him spanking with one hand while she shook with the other.

"Git over dar now and pick de fedders out yo' no-count wool. Don't sta't no sniv'lin.' Dem fedders got no teef. Dey doan bite. Pick 'em off wid one han' an'

MAMMY

fight de houn's wid de odder. You niggers on dat bench—what you grinnin' at? You Mollie Maudie—is yo' 'spectin' Mars Judge an' Li'l' Missy an' all de gran' pussons what am guests to eat de fedders you leaves? Doan you know what happen when a white pusson fill up on pin fedders? He gits de crowin' sickness an' crows an' crows an' flaps an' flaps twell he takes a fit an' dies. See dem specks? Pinch 'em out nigger—pinch! Pinfedder fits is sure death!"

"I'se done et a bushel ob fedders an' I ain't dead," Mosey announced proudly.

"You et fedders—an' habben't died? Huh! You've et rocks too an' you've et grass an' bugs, an' dirt—but is yo' white? A white pusson's insides is different f'om a nigger's, same as de outside is different. Besides—who axed you to speak? Doan you speak to me ag'in or I'll smack de sassy mouf offen yo' head."

Mammy was about to step into the kitchen when she caught sight of Ann Leuin at the mint bed, whither she hurried.

"Good mornin', darlin' chile!" she said as Ann Leuin bent over the green leaves. "I'se been up since 'fore day kaze I wanted to be de fust to gib you Gawd's blessin' on yo' birfday an' han' you my present 'fore all de gran' fine presents comes. Here, darlin'—look what yo' mammy got you," and she drew forth the basket of figs. "Nobody hab so sweet a mouf for dese fat, juicy ones as you."

"Mammy—you dear old Mammy!" Ann Leuin laughed as she tried a fig. "This is the best thing I have tasted in a year! They are lovely!"

"T'ank you darlin' chile. Doan seem lak you'se eighteen today. I put de fust dress on you. Yo' a'ms an' legs wiggled lak worms an' you was dat little yo' ol' black mammy's han' could reach 'roun' yo' back. An' all de birfdays dat come I put de clo'es on you an' you allus gib yo' mammy a hug 'roun' de neck. But—*now* you'se eighteen."

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Mammy's voice took on a note of sadness which called a ripple of laughter from Ann Leuin.

"Suppose I 'is' eighteen—can't I hug my old black mammy? I guess I can," and for a moment the white arms clasped the black neck.

"Gawd bress you, darlin'," Mammy said, wiping tears of joy from her eyes. "Yes, you'se eighteen. De beaux dey done sta'ted comin' an' one ob dem gwine git you. Yo' white mammy was done got 'fore she was old as you. On her birfday when she was eighteen she was hol'in' Mars Gus in her a'ms. Yo' pappy he was dat set on gittin' yo' mammy, he was gwine carry her off at night on a hoss. He say he lub her so he can't wait twell she's eighteen."

"Run away with my mother? But she would not have run away with him."

"Lor', honey, you dunno what a turrible disease dis love am. Yo' mammy was as deep in de mud as you daddy was in de mire. She done tol' me she gwine run off wid him an' ef he didn't carry her off she's gwine chase him twell she kotch him. When Ole Missy—dat's yo' mammy's mammy, foun' out how sot she was, she give a weddin' for her."

"Were you going to help my mother run away with my father?"

"I wasn't goin' do nothin' else, kaze I was yo' mammy's shore-'nough mammy. I was gwine 'long, too."

"Would you help me run away—if I had to?"

Mammy considered. Judge and Mrs. Laury were much opposed to run-away marriages.

"I said 'if I had to'," Ann Leuin repeated.

"Course ef you *had* to—why den,—yes, honey chile, ef you *had* to—'cept you was aimin' to run off wid dat gem'men wid eyes screwed too fur in his head—de res' looks all right."

"A gentleman with eyes screwed too far into his head?"

"Dat's de one I's speakin' ob. De squeenchy li'l' eyes

MAMMY

dat shines lak a bug an' de distance am short whar de top of his nose leave off an' his ha'r begin."

"You mean Mr. Jefferson Bresler, Oh Mammy!" And Ann Leuin again laughed. "Well, don't worry your woolly old head about him."

"No, honey-chile. I'se not gwine worry. But keep yo' shinin' eyes open when he's about. His neck am so thick he's kin to de water moccasin, an' de skunk am his better fo' manners—he shorly am. But you better be goin'. Yo' pappy sent you for mint. Mars Jedge gits powerful dry when he wait too long, an' when he go *plum bone dry* he sure do cuss. You habben't heered him? No, kaze he's a fine gentleman an' don't cuss where white ladies is. Git yo' mint now and go."

"Thank you—thank you for my birthday present. I can get nothing nicer—it was a real surprise."

"Surprise! Lor', honey, dis day am chock full ob surprises. Yo' pappy gwine give you a tea cup of diamond rings named, a heirloom, to put on yo' white fingers. Hit's gwine be a plum surprise. You ain't gwine know nothin' 'bout it 'til dinner. An' yo' aunty in Canady she done sont shoe buckles worth a hundred dollars—an' lordy, they's heaps an' heaps of presents—all surprises."

"The diamond necklace, Mammy—I wanted one you know."

"Lor' Honey," and Mammy chuckled. "Dats de wust ob all de s'prises. You'se gwine git dat to wear at de ball tonight. You'se gwine mighty nigh faint wid s'prise when you gits to de bottom ob de stairs, an' you'se not gwine know nothin' 'bout hit—nothin'."

"Bless your heart Mammy," Ann Leuin laughed then she hurried to the broad piazza with her fresh figs and mint leaves.

CHAPTER III

“THE RACE IS ON!”

WHEN Ann Leuin came downstairs dressed for breakfast she found Jefferson Bresler impatiently waiting for her.

“ You went riding,” he said.

“ Yes, indeed—had the grandest race with Gus and Del Norcrosse! ”

“ Why was I left? ”

“ Were you left? ” she asked innocently.

“ I didn’t go, did I? And didn’t I say last night I wanted to go? ”

“ If you wanted to go, why didn’t you? It was a free for all.”

“ I wasn’t called.”

“ Called? Neither was I, except by my love of riding.”

“ Not love of riding, but love for the rider is *my* love, and I am going to insist on a ride with you.”

“ All right, after breakfast. I’ll run you a race—you on any horse you may choose, except my own, and for any wager you may name. Around the driveway once is a quarter, four times, a mile. How many miles do you want to run—a hundred? ” and Ann Leuin’s merry laugh ended her challenge.

“ I lost out on the julep, too,” he complained. “ In Mobile gentlemen do not crawl out with the first cock crowing. Anything left to drink? ”

“ There’s always plenty left. Here’s a glass—here’s mint, sugar, everything. Shall I stir you a drink? ”

Bresler stood close and watched. When she would have poured a small portion of liquor, he caught her hand, held it over the glass, and pressing the bottle hard within, emptied its contents.

“ You are fixing it just right for me,” he laughed. “ I

THE RACE IS ON

don't fancy spring water nor skimmed milk. Now—take the bottle and here's to your health!" and he drained the glass.

"Let's have another—where's the bottle?"

"Bottle? I thought you were going to race with me. Better leave the bottle until after the race."

"As you will, fair lady—as you will. Come then, let us go to breakfast. Is not that the bell?"

Ann Leuin hesitated and looked about. Bresler was at her side. Gus walked with his fiancée Marie Du Pree. She wondered with whom Del Norcrosse would enter and smiled across the table when she saw him come in with Uncle Honey.

When the entire party had gathered on the veranda and the horses had been brought, the race was announced.

"I will ride for the hand of fair Ann Leuin—the belle of Mississippi," Bresler announced proudly. "In Mobile where gentlemen are masters of the art of riding, I have a reputation. I ride for luck. How many times shall we make the round of the driveway, my fair lady?"

"As long as you like. I can ride all day if you care for so much."

"No—only enough to win a lady's hand."

"All right—the race is on!"

A moment later two horses were going down the driveway at break-neck speed. The party on the porch shouted and clapped and speculated. As the racers rounded the end of the road Bresler was seen to be in the lead and riding like mad. Close behind, Ann Leuin heard the lead horse utter a stifled cry that meant a hurt. What the rider had done she did not know. What she would do she did know.

Bending over she spoke to El Capitan. The next minute he dashed up the curve like a greyhound on the scent, passed Bresler and watched for him at the gate.

"Want to go again?" she asked as the porch cheered.

"Can't you give a fellow time to get his breath?"

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“ Loads of it—hours of it. When you are ready for the next lap, I’m ready.”

“ Riding for her hand were you? ” one of the gentlemen asked as they came up the steps. “ If you were—why you got left.”

“ He rode well,” Ann Leuin said. “ He rode well enough to be congratulated. Here,” and she held out her hand.

“ Ah-ha! ” Bresler exclaimed, the angry look leaving his face. “ What I did not win is given me—because I should have won—See, I win—her hand! ”

Laughter followed this speech. A tinge of pink flushed Ann Leuin’s cheeks, but she replied sweetly, “ You mistake—I give you the hand of a victor—I am generous—but a victor, remember.”

The face of Bresler grew dark again. Nor was there anything in the next move to lessen his displeasure.

“ A challenge! I will ride! My friend has ridden for the *hand* of a fair maiden. I desire to ride for her heart—for the *heart* of the belle of Mississippi. I challenge you! Will you race with me? ” It was Norcrosse.

“ I have never yet refused a race. Can I begin here in my own home with my own guests? The race is on, Del Norcrosse.”

Again two horses made a dash. As they rounded the bend Ann Leuin who was ahead, leaned slightly over her horse’s head. The next minute Norcrosse was ahead. But his gain was only for a moment. Ann Leuin again spoke to her steed and like a flash, he gained the side of Del Norcrosse.

“ Neck and neck! ” shouted Judge Laury as the two reached the gate.

“ Shall we run again? ” Del Norcrosse asked.

“ Let’s not—not just yet,” she said.

Together on the porch, Ann Leuin offered her hand to Norcrosse as she had to Bresler.

THE RACE IS ON

“Is it the hand of the victor to the vanquished?” he asked.

“What other kind could it be?”

“Then in the presence of God and these witnesses, I’ll not take the hand. Vanquished? Me? Never!”

An hour later Bresler chanced to find Norcrosse alone for the moment.

“The race is on,” he whispered in his ear.

“Race—what race?”

“Race—*what* race! You know! But hear! The race is not between the girl and me, or the girl and you. The race is between *you* and me. Don’t forget—‘*The race is on*’.”

CHAPTER IV

OUT OF THE WEST

THE dinner party! Could any one present ever forget it? The table appointments of damask and crystal and silver and flowers. The animated and handsome party gathered around it!

"Only the gods and goddesses from Olympus should dine here today," said Senator Thompson as he and his wife took favored positions at the long board, for they had come from Washington especially to do honor to Judge and Mrs. Laury and their beautiful daughter.

Ann Leuin received many presents. Her father's gift came at the table when she was presented with the "heirloom" rings. As much surprised as if Mammy had never told her anything about them, she laughed merrily, thinking of the greater surprise that was to be fastened around her neck before the ball.

After dinner the young people gathered around the piano where the sparkling hands of Ann Leuin were soon dancing over the ivory keys while the group around her sang popular songs of the day.

Jefferson Bresler, Del Norcrosse, Ann Leuin, and Marie Du Pree sang well together. But it was when Gus sang the older guests listened most attentively. His voice was sweet and rich and his song seemed to come from a deeper heart than his mirthful way suggested with the words—

"And may perhaps in such a scene
Some recollection be,
Of days that have as happy been
And you'll remember me—
And you'll remember me."

He seemed to be singing to Marie Du Pree, but his voice carried an appeal that in after years echoed back from

OUT OF THE WEST

the place of fond memories, and brought heart pain when other voices sang—"You'll remember me."

Until the name of Abraham Lincoln was mentioned around the table, political gossip divided time with music. But when Senator Thompson began giving an eye-witness account of the scene at the Wigwam where Abraham Lincoln had been nominated for the presidency of the United States the month before, sentiment and melody were forgotten.

Judge Laury opened a fresh bottle, glasses were refilled. Desultory gossip was to give way to serious speech.

Seeing the bottle uncorked, Bresler at the piano was torn between conflicting emotions. He stood beside Ann Leuin and fanned her, knowing Norcross was only waiting to step into his place. Should he join the party at the table for the reward of more liquor and be bored by political talk? Taking one last long look, he decided to stay by Ann Leuin.

The table talk proceeded.

"There has never been," Senator Thompson was saying, "anything in the annals of civilized politics like the nomination of Abraham Lincoln. There were fully ten thousand people in the Wigwam on that May morning—over nine hundred editors and reporters."

"Who was there?"

"Among the editors, Horace Greeley, Murat Halstead, Joseph Medill and a dozen other big ones. William M. Evarts, Carl Schurz, Thaddeus Stevens, Cassius M. Clay—a long list of such luminaries. Illinois sweat bloody sweat to keep their man Lincoln from being nominated for vice-president. I heard the entire delegation sat up all night. So did hundreds of delegates from Pennsylvania, Indiana and other states. Crazy and haggard they still worked as if on a wager, going from caucus room to caucus room at the Tremont House. Not only was the Wigwam packed when it came time to begin, but for blocks on the outside a surging, struggling crowd sought to know what went on inside. Evarts nominated Seward. The New Yorkers had prepared for a mighty demonstration which broke forth on schedule and

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no such roar and applause had been heard to this time. Mind you gentlemen, I say 'until this time' for when Lincoln was nominated—God gentlemen! While Seward's men had been parading around the streets, the Illinois men had been busy packing the Wigwam with men of big enough lung power to call cattle from San Francisco to Chicago, or sound a fog horn across the Great Lakes. They had been well instructed for a 'spontaneous outbreak', even the women were ready to wave handkerchiefs and flags by the hundred. A series of signals had been arranged to carry news from the Wigwam to the crowd outside. When Judd nominated Lincoln, the machinery began to work. Smith of Indiana seconded the nomination and then—the deluge. Sweet says—'No mortal before saw such a scene. Five thousand people at once leaped to their seats and the wild yell that went out made vesper breathing of all that had preceded. No language can describe it. A thousand steam whistles, ten acres of hotel gongs, a tribe of Comanches headed by a choice vanguard from pandemonium might have mingled in the scene unnoticed.' When a few moments later the votes all turned to Lincoln and he was actually nominated, the scene is past describing, so they say. Illinois rejoiced to the point of silent weeping as the delegates shook hands and struggled to keep from breaking down entirely. When the crowd saw this there was an instant of silence, deep as death, then the greatest yell ever heard broke from ten thousand throats. Men leapt up and down, tossed hats, handkerchiefs and canes into the air. Flags waved frantically and for ten solid minutes the roar was deafening and the commotion indescribable. Then the great shout began to rise and fall in billowing bursts and for another five minutes these waves of uncontrollable excitement, now rising into the deepest and fiercest shouts and then sinking like the ground swell of the ocean into hoarse murmurs, rolled through the multitude. Every now and then when it would seem the physical lung power of the crowd was exhausted, a fresh hurricane broke loose.

"Outside the crowd took up the demonstration. A man

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on the platform shouted to a man on the roof of the Wigwam—'Hallelujah' Abe Lincoln is nominated! A cannon boomed the news to the multitude below and twenty thousand throats took up the shout. The city heard it and a hundred guns on the Tremont House began bellowing out the news. Whistles on the lake front and river, locomotives and factories added their shrill screaming and the bells in the steeples broke forth and for twenty-four hours—*twenty-four hours, gentlemen*, the clamor never ceased! Was anything like it ever heard of? The West is crazy, gentlemen—*crazy*! If this fever shall be contagious, God help us!"

"It will not be—it cannot be," Judge Laury said. "If the Black Republicans want to make a success of their devilish schemes, they should not put a failure at their head."

"I do not remember him as a failure in Congress," said Senator Thompson. "He was there one term '47-'48; was a Whig, as were Alexander H. Stevens, Robert Toombs and both Virginia Congressmen. Howell Cobb and I had more than one tilt with these Whig members fighting for Democracy. John Quincy Adams, also a Whig, died that year. A remarkably brilliant congressional body that was. Well do I remember Lincoln. Tall, angular, loose knit. He carried a cane, but not to walk with, as is customary among gentlemen. His cane was used to carry books. Books were a part of Lincoln. To have seen him taking his way down the Avenue without his coat would have seemed more natural than to have seen him without those books which were generally tied in a bandana and swung over his shoulder on the cane. He wore an alpaca coat, the sleeves always turned up as if he were in session and getting ready to pound something. He wore no beard, had a big inquisitive nose and deep-lined face, a pair of lines crossing his cheeks like deep cuts."

"Did he ever do any legislative pounding?"

"President Polk thought he did. Lincoln stood flat-footed against war. He questioned the necessity of the War with Mexico and challenged in a set of resolutions state-

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ments made by President Polk. He stood by the country however, after it got into war and voted all war appropriations. His real interest was along the lines of constructive development like that of postal service and post roads."

"Evidently his services were not highly valued. He was not sent back."

"No, he dropped out of sight as completely as if he had been buried until he bobbed up ten years later to check the brilliant career of Douglas."

"Douglas was the man."

"Yes—a brilliant fellow—a gentleman. Never saw him footing it up the Avenue with a burden of books swung over his shoulder on a cane. He travelled like a gentleman. In the famous debates, he had his own private car.

"Shot up like a sky-rocket, out of these debates—this Lincoln did—and now he is the subject of a terrific pow-wow—a great and noisy demonstration. But wind, air, enthusiasm never made a success of a failure. And if there has ever been a more monumental failure in America than this same Lincoln, God pity him! Just a few days ago I saw a brief sketch of his failures. Back in the early days of his aspirations to fame and fortune he was beaten in the race for his own state legislature by a Methodist preacher—an old circuit rider named Cartwright. He went into business, failed and was seventeen years paying his debts. He fell in love. The girl died. He ran for Congress and was defeated—he tried for an appointment to a United States land office and failed to get it—he was candidate for United States Senate and was badly beaten. Was beaten for vice-president in 1856 and again went down to defeat before Douglas in 1858. Think you this is the man to put at the head of anything expecting victory? As surely as a stray mongrel howling at the moon brings death to the nigger, so surely will this mongrel bring death to this Black Republican party that's sprung up like a gang of imps from Hades. Out of the West! Who knows the West? Out of the East has come forth wisdom—the North and the South know what sort of men they give us. But what comes from the West?"

OUT OF THE WEST

"Rail splitters," Senator Thompson promptly answered.

A general laugh followed his answer to Judge Laury's serious question. Glasses were filled again. After a brief silence, broken by the sipping of fair wine, Honeycutt said,

"The West—unknown—untried—crude—wild—savage maybe. But it was out of the West the cloud came that brought the storm in the days of good old Elijah—remember the story? Sad and dejected the ancient prophet sat on Mount Carmel when he was bidden to lift up his eyes. Seven times he looked before he saw this cloud of portent rising no larger than a man's hand from the Western sea."

"Cloud of portent," Senator Thompson repeated. "You're right."

"Gentlemen, you're wrong—both of you wrong." It was Judge Laury who spoke. "If the Black Republicans should win, the storm that comes from Honeycutt's cloud of portent will be civil war. Not in a thousand years will Abraham Lincoln be elected. Our forefathers never fought, bled and died to establish a republic to be destroyed by the irresponsible and uncouth figure head of a Black Republican gang," and Judge Laury emphasized his remarks by hammering the table.

"I cannot quite class him as a 'figure head,'" Senator Thompson observed, "and I believe you will agree with me before this thing is over that he has a mind of his own."

"You may even agree," Honeycutt said dryly, "the man has a soul—if you believe in souls."

"I believe in souls. I believe that God puts a soul or its germ in every human being together with possibilities for its development. But, gentlemen, hear me! Generations will come and go before the soul of this arch foe of peace in our Republic—the soul of Abe Lincoln, attains its majority dimensions!"

"Prophet as well as jurist," Senator Thompson laughed as he watched a ring of smoke circle itself into dissolution over the head of Judge Laury.

CHAPTER V

AT SOOKY'S CRIB

THE birthday ball was to take place in the pavillion on the shore of the Swan's Neck, a beautifully curved body of water lying on the edge of the Laury plantation and reaching several miles from its upper end where the buildings and walks were to the canebrake and swamps below.

After dinner and while the gentlemen were preparing for a bear barbecue, which was to be a part of the festivities, Mrs. Laury and her guests went to the pavillion to supervise decorations and enjoy reminiscent talk of gorgeous days spent in Washington where Mrs. Thompson had long been a brilliant and popular hostess and had entertained both Mrs. Laury and Ann Leuin.

"Ann Leuin was a great favorite during her visit at the Capital and admiring beaux greeted her at every turn. Several of the reigning belles of last winter are already married. I am surprised that your beautiful daughter is yet with you." There was a delicate hint for information in Mrs. Thompson's tone.

"Ann Leuin hasn't seemed to take the proper interest in young men. Most girls do long before they are eighteen. But Gus, the dear boy, is already engaged."

"How old is Marie Du Pree?"

"Sixteen—they will be married before Gus goes to Europe. You know, Gus will travel a year before he takes up law. His father is making great plans, expects to see him in Congress, his name written high with the illustrious sons of the South. But Ann—Ann just keeps on having a good time like a little girl, and her father likes it that way. I have suggested that if she put her hair in a net as other young ladies do she would feel more grown up. But he says 'No, if other girls had as beautiful hair as Ann Leuin, they wouldn't net it either'."

AT SOOKY'S CRIB

“Don’t let him carry this little girl idea too far, for even Ann Leuin *might* be an old maid. Such things have happened. I had two children before I was eighteen.”

“Gus was in my arms before my eighteenth birthday.”

“Perhaps Ann Leuin will soon make a choice. Surely she has opportunity. I noticed at the piano today—three or four of them, but Mr. Bresler and Mr. Norcrosse seem to be most persistent. Which does Ann Leuin like best?”

Mrs. Laury laughed as she said, “I don’t know that she likes either.”

“Jefferson Bresler belongs to a fine old Mobile family and has lots of money.”

“Norcrosse belongs to a fine old Virginia family. He too has money—two inheritances. One from his father’s people back in England, the other from his mother, who comes from an old Virginia family. But where are the girls? Ann Leuin said they were coming to help decorate before the barbecue.”

While the ladies were enjoying the glories of Washington society as retold at the pavillion, Ann Leuin and her guests were enjoying themselves another way.

Their rambles over the plantation had taken them to Sooky’s Crib, a fenced-in lot in which were several cabins the largest the headquarters of Sooky, a matronly black slave with large white eyes.

In this enclosure were not less than fifty slaves, ranging in age from three months to six years and in color from chocolate brown to black and with a few yellow, showing that a strain of white blood had by some strange chance become transfused with African.

Along one side of the yard stood a row of wooden troughs on legs, out of which the dusky infants ate mush and clabber, this latter an exciting dainty. At the end of the cabin was a water barrel with gourd dippers hanging about it. Some of the smallest inmates were stark naked—some sat flat on the ground digging in the dirt, others were lying down and babies were crawling about like giant bugs. At one end

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of the cabin three ample-breasted negresses acted as wet nurses for the crib.

At the approach of Ann Leuin and her guests, conversation stopped and the slave babies stared.

"My land! My land!" exclaimed Cora Vann, a school girl from Ohio, clapping her hands. "Aren't they the cutest things you ever saw?"

Ann Leuin laughed, Marie Du Pree pinched her nose and said, "Cute? Horrors! Who ever thought of such a thing!"

"But they *are* cute! Look at that little fellow crawling by the bench! Look! He has *wool* on his head! What does it feel like—a kitten?"

Ann Leuin shouted with laughter. "Sooky," she said, "bring it over here." And to her friend, "Here now, feel it's wool."

Rather timidly Cora ran her fingers over the woolly head. "Isn't it a dear? Look! What's its name?"

"Hit am name Lily."

"Lily—but it's a boy," Ann Leuin exclaimed.

"And it's black," Cora added.

"Yes'm—yes'm. Hit am bof black an' boy. But dat mak' no diff'rence." Does yo' 'member de white lady here two yea's ago las' summa name Mis' Lily? Since dat date he bin name Lily."

"I wish I had one of them," said Cora.

"What for?"

"To take home. Folks where I live never saw any such queer little things."

"All right, I'll give you one—to celebrate my birthday. Pick it out."

"Let me feel that one."

"Dat am Belly-button-big-eye."

"What a name. What is he named that for?"

"His belly-button, hit stick out lak a big eye."

"There's two the same size over there."

"Dem's 'Summa an' Winta.' Dey's twin niggers."

"But they both got here the same time?"

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" Yes Missy, but one sta'ted sweatin' an' tother sneezin' de fust night an' got called accordin'."

" Do you want a boy or a girl? " Ann Leuin asked Cora.

" A girl—a dear little girl—the wooliest one here with round eyes—there's a cute one over there," and she pointed.

" Bring it here," was Ann Leuin's order."

" What's its name? " asked Cora.

" Po' Houn'."

" Yessum, Missy. Atter de white houn' got kicked by de mule we name her kaze we sorry de houn' died. She's a right pert little nigger."

The Ohio girl looked the child over, felt her wool, her dimpled black hands—" ' Po' Houn,' " she repeated. " Ann Leuin, has she been christened? "

Ann Leuin's answer was a peal of laughter. " Christened? Christened? Really she hasn't."

" Then I can change her name. I think I shall name her after Queen Victoria. Don't you think that would be nice—she's so cute. With another name—Victoria Estelle—how do you like it? "

" I'd call her Victoria Regina, I believe," and again Ann Leuin laughed. " But what are you going to do with her? "

" Teach her to be my maid, like your Rosa."

" She won't be any account for that for twelve years."

" What could I do with her? "

" Nothing. We feed them and let them grow just as we do the calves and chickens."

Further talk was cut off by the coming of four horsemen, Gus, Bresler, Norcrosse and a young man from Baltimore.

" The bears have been killed long ago. The flesh is browning over the coals. The negroes are dancing! You are missing something. Let's go! "

Without more invitation, as in the days of old, Gus helped Marie on his horse. Baltimore was quick to take a New Orleans guest. Ann Leuin moved a step toward Nor-

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crosse, but was caught in the strong arm of Bresler who took her with him. Del Norcrosse gallantly helped Cora Vann to a place on his mount and they were off.

Bresler's undue haste had not pleased Ann Leuin. Close to him on the horse she noted he had been drinking yet more. His breath was obnoxious. She leaned away from him.

"What's the matter, fair lady?" he laughed. "Don't you like the quality of the liquor?"

"It's not the quality, its quantity I object to."

He was silent a moment. His face flushed. "You do not think I have had too much, do you?"

"A gentleman *never* takes too much," was her answer. Bresler pondered. Just what did she mean?

"And I am going to ask you to take your arm from around me."

"I am holding you on, Princess mine."

"Since when do I need holding on a horse? Hold yourself on—not me."

Ann Leuin was angry.

"As you say—until after tonight. I have told Norcrosse not to cross my path. I am your escort tonight, by your own wish."

"You told Del Norcrosse that? It is not true! Why did you do it?"

"All is fair in love and war, little maiden, and for love I'll go the whole measure of war. You had as well understand this—the *full measure*. Tonight—the world will never be the same for me after tonight.

Ann Leuin wondered what he meant but was too angry to ask, and as soon as her feet touched the ground at the Swan's Neck, she hurried to the pavillion where she stayed until the entire party of ladies went to the barbecue.

CHAPTER VI

THE BURNING KISS

THE sun had not set when the young ladies of the Laury house party began the delightful task of dressing for Ann Leuin's birthday dance.

With a slave maiden for each white beauty, the owners sat before mirrors and directed the dressing of their hair and feet, the decorations of bodices, the looping of ribbons and the tying of sashes, each slave looking with jealous pride upon her own mistress as the most beautiful, and her finery as the finest.

As the costumes were completed, the house guests went to Ann Leuin's room to see Rosa put the finishing touches to the party dress as its fair wearer stood before the long mirror. This white dress was flounced with lace made in a French convent and over an extra large hoop skirt Ann Leuin's slender bare neck and arms suggested a mermaid lifting herself from some foamy billow. From one shoulder across her bodice and falling like a sash, was a garland and cluster of roses, and when Ann Leuin told Mammy she could never dance a step unless her dear old black fingers helped fasten the roses on, Mammy smiled until her black skin seemed to exude sunshine. Mammy's importance was further emphasized by being put in charge of Ann Leuin's bag of handkerchiefs and bouquet of fresh flowers wrapped in wet paper, towels and toilet articles to be used as occasion might demand.

At the foot of the stairs Judge and Mrs. Laury were waiting with the big surprise—the diamond necklace—which was clasped on Ann Leuin's neck while the circle of guests clapped their hands and admired the sparkling jewels that rivalled the stones on her fingers.

Norerosse and Bresler were both watching for Ann

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Leuin, and were among the first to congratulate her on her lovely appearance, after which Norcrosse paid some attention to other guests, but Bresler did not allow Ann Leuin to get three feet beyond reach of him.

Remembering that he had said, "I'll go the full measure of war and you had as well know this," his actions annoyed her and she determined to keep near Del Norcrosse so that he, instead of Bresler, should be her carriage escort to the Swan's Neck.

This hope was not destined to flower. When the call was made for the carriage drive, Ann Leuin looked for Del Norcrosse. He was quite near, but Bresler pushed in, offered Ann Leuin his arm and said, bowing gallantly, "Congratulate me, there is but one Ann Leuin!"

Turning her eyes quickly, Ann Leuin saw Norcrosse moving away to assist a guest. She did not try to conceal her displeasure, and knew if she talked she would be sure to say something discourteous to a guest. So she said nothing.

"How many dances am I to have?" Bresler asked when they were on the way.

"One."

"One—and I should have all but one. Is not an escort entitled to such preference?"

"A kidnapper is not an escort."

"A kidnapper? Ha! Ha! Kidnapper—it gives me an idea. How would you like to have me kidnap you, little beauty?"

"I don't like such silly talk," she exclaimed angrily.

"Silly! Silly, you say for a lover to think of taking his love?" and he leaned quite close to her with the question.

Again she was reminded of her father's bottles. She had not known before their contents possessed such a repulsive odor. She determined she would not ride home with him, if she must appeal to Gus to help her out. He always knew how to manage and he would not get angry as her father might.

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In addition to the musicians who played stringed instruments, Judge Laury had his negro quartet, whose musical numbers always delighted company. These were at the pavillion singing as guests came from the house. The pavillion was bright with hundreds of candles from chandeliers and side clusters, while outside a clear moon rode the heavens and made the perfumed woods a mellow-lighted garden and the lake a sheet of silver.

The ball opened with a grand march led by Judge and Mrs. Laury—then came a contra-dance, a quadrille, a basket cotillion and a Virginia reel. After three dances, which Bresler insisted on having with Ann Leuin because he was her escort, he excused himself.

“There’s a little log house not far away where the Judge is dispensing hospitality—my kind. Excuse me long enough to sample the excellent liquors he has set upon the table.”

Ann Leuin breathed free when he had gone and determined to find Del Norcrosse. But she did not see him anywhere and wondered if he were with Cora Vann, until she saw her Ohio friend with a Vicksburg gentleman.

The music started again. Ann Leuin danced with a friend from Baltimore, but before the dance was finished she caught sight of Bresler watching her and when it was over he was at hand to claim her for the next dance which she promptly refused him.

“Then let us ride on the water.”

“Not without a chaperone,” she answered.

“Chaperone? The devil! You don’t mean it.”

“Very much I do.”

“All right, Miss Proper, then we will walk—come.”

She ignored his proffered arm as she said, “No farther than the garden house—I have other dances promised.”

At the door of the vine-covered house they stopped.

Ann Leuin hesitated.

“Afraid somebody will come and lock us up together?” he laughed as he examined a large wooden latch on the

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outside. "Let us rest a few moments I have something to say before we dance again."

Ann Leuin entered. Bresler drew the door close, but did not drop the latch.

"Now here we are, my little love—my famous beauty! Are you ready to say 'yes' to the question I asked you in New Orleans? You requested time, you remember."

"And I have had time—sufficient time to say—"

"Yes?" he asked eagerly.

"To say 'No!'"

"You don't mean it!"

"I mean it."

"But you *can't* mean it."

"Why not?"

"Mean you refuse to marry ME?"

"Yes, YOU—why *should* I marry you?"

"Because I want you to—and because, you want to unless that dirty puppy of a Norcrosse has poisoned your mind against me. By God, you *will* marry me, *anyway*, Ann Leuin Laury."

"Don't you touch me!" she said as he drew close to her.

"Not touch you! I shall kiss you until your fair face burns with the fire of love I feel for you! You are mine!"

The next minute Bresler had thrown his arms around Ann Leuin and was pressing his hot lips against her quivering dimple. It was only for an instant. When he drew back to see the effect she struck him with her clenched fist bristling with hard stones set in antique mountings. And as she struck she sprang up and turned toward the door.

But he was nearer it than she and with his back to the exit he turned upon her, his face white with anger and his small eyes twinkling with wrath.

"Coward," she said in his face. "It *does* burn—burns like coals. It is burning fiery letters that spell 'I hate you' and whenever I see you it will burn, though it be years. Whenever I hear your name; whenever I catch

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the scent of a heavy liquor breath, it will set up the burning 'I hate you.' Go from here or I shall call my father! "

" You struck me," he found words to say.

" Yes—I hit you in the eye and I am glad! Coward! Coward! "

" Coward am I? " and covering his bruised eye with his hand he fastened the other upon her. " For this you shall be locked up until you are over this devil's tantrum. When I come back you will be cooled off and ready to come to terms. No use to call or scream. Gus is on the water. Your father is with the bottles, and Norcrosse—that dirty cur—is spooning down the lakeside with Cora Vann. Cool off and come to terms," and with the words he left the garden house and Ann Leuin heard the heavy latch fall into place.

She knew the door could not be opened from the inside, but it was not necessary that it should. Well she knew just how much the vine-covered lattice lacked of reaching the top. In days past she and Gus had run races up and down the lattice, holding on with bare toes and dropping over the top space.

Hastily removing her hoop skirt she bound it in a small bundle and put it with her slippers just inside the door. Then gathering her abundant lacy skirts under her arm she climbed the lattice wall, pushed the vines aside, crawled over the top and was soon standing in the shadows outside.

Hearing a foot-step that sounded like that of Gus she called in low voice, " Brother! Brother! "

The next minute a tall form stood before her—Norcrosse.

She dropped her skirt, the filmy ruffles made to cover a hoop skirt falling around her slender body like a drapery and covering her shoeless feet.

" Gus is on the lake. What have I done that I can be of no service? Can I do anything? "

" Help me cool off—I'm burning up! "

" Burning up? Have you a fever—are you ill? "

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“No—just furious. Take me to the lake to cool off and don’t speak a word to me.”

Norcrosse gazed in wonder. Like a walking balloon when he last saw her, now she looked like a thinly veiled statue and he noticed when she moved that she was shoeless.

“Wait—my slippers! I had to take them off to get out of the garden house. Help me put them on—then take me to the lake—I’m burning up!”

“I have been riding alone. The boat is tied in the thick shadows. Come—this way.”

In silence they made their way to the boat. Norcrosse assisted Ann Leuin in and took up the oars.

“We’ll have to go by the pavillion steps for I must see Mammy. But go slow in the shade and paddle softly.”

Not a word was spoken until the boat reached the steps and Ann Leuin called Mammy.

“Mammy—I went into the garden house to rest a minute and cool off and somebody came by and thoughtlessly closed the door. I had to take off my hoop skirt to climb over the top. It’s inside the door. I’ll be back in a few minutes. Be ready to fix me again for the dance.”

The boat turned slowly, and softly slipped into the shadows. When they were away Ann Leuin dropped her head against the edge of the boat and sobbed.

Bresler left the garden house with his handkerchief to his eye. When he took it down it had stains on it. What should he do? What could he do by way of explanation?

Angry beyond power of words to describe, he walked to the edge of the lake not far from the pavillion and stood to think. From his place he saw Mammy on the steps. He approached her.

“Say old nigger—get a towel for me.”

Mammy did not seem to hear.

“Say—can’t you hear? Do you know who I am?”

“No suh—no suh—bofe times ‘no suh’.”

“I am Thomas Jefferson Bresler. I was walking about and something hit me in the eye.”

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“ Yes suh—you runned into a rock what was flyin’ lak a bird.”

“ None of your damn impudence, you sassy nigger. I ran into a broken tree limb and it nearly gouged my eye out. I want a towel.”

“ Yes suh—dat’s what I heered you say.”

“ Will you move yourself and get it? ”

“ Yes suh, when Mis’ Ann Leuin come and tell me to. I’s settin’ on dis spot twell she tell me to move. Dey’s plenty ob towels an’ water an’ men niggers in de log house ef you’s in a hurry to get de blood outen yo’ eye.”

With a half-spoken curse Bresler turned away.

“ De honery skunk,” Mammy said as she watched his retreating figure.

CHAPTER VII

TREE-TOP PRISONERS

FOR a few moments the light dip of the paddle was the only accompaniment to Ann Leuin's sobbing. Then giving her eyes a final rub with her hand she lifted her face to Norcrosse and said, "You haven't spoken a word."

"You asked me not to."

"Yes—but I am sure it must seem strange to you."

"Strange? I am walking alone wondering why Ann Leuin Laury, who invited me to her birthday party, had cut me so dead when I come upon her calling her brother. She does not appear to be in regulation attire; she complains of having been hurt, burned or feverish; she cries. Strange? Yes—but the cherished letters I have received from you and the beautiful portrait on my table are not strange—only the girl herself."

The cool night breeze blowing over the water, together with the silence kept by Norcrosse seemed to have had a pacifying effect on Ann Leuin. She laughed quite naturally and explained, "It was this way. I was in the garden house. A man came in—a robber."

"A robber! My God—your jewels—"

"They're all right," and Ann Leuin lifted her hand and held it against the necklace on her throat. "It wasn't my rings and necklace he stole. He stole a kiss."

"Oh! Stole a kiss?"

"Yes, stole it and his burning lips poisoned me. I hope it doesn't blister," and she rubbed her cheek. "I'd be disgraced forever."

"Was the villain some intruder?"

"Intruder? Do not ask me who he was for he is a guest, and while it might be proper to kill him, I could not tattle—not to you. But here's a straw, scan the faces of the gentle-

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men tomorrow. If there is one with a bunch of purple grapes or dark blue cherries somewhere about his eye, my fist of heirlooms made it."

Again there was a moment of silence. A night bird called and dipped its wings low on the water—then Norcrosse said, "There's liable to be some shooting around here before this party is over."

"Not with him for who would shoot a man in the back? But let's not talk about it. The breeze is cooling me. Sing—I like your voice."

Norcrosse sang—

"Oh, the heart that has truly loved never forgets,
But as truly loves on to the close,
As the sun-flower turns on her god when he sets,
The same look that she gave when he rose."

"What are you singing that for?" Ann Leuin laughed, "that's father's. He sings it with mother in mind. Mammy says he's more in love with her now than he was when he courted her."

"Your father's not the only man who knows the kind of love that wears. I'm singing this song because I love his daughter the way he loves that daughter's mother. Let me tell you, Ann Leuin, since I met you in Richmond I have known no other girl would ever do for me. I've been planning by day and dreaming by night of the time I could see you and tell you and ask you. After it all, I come to find you giving every minute of your time to Bresler. I'm going away tomorrow."

"I don't give it to him! He takes it! Don't ever mention his name to me again. I hate him! Talk about something I like to hear."

"Name it."

"You love me. I am glad—I want you to. Let's talk about *it*."

They had reached the lower end of the water, bordered here by the canebrake. The moon shone brightly and where

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there was a bit of smooth under a giant low-limbed tree, the shade was like that of a moving, flowered carpet.

"I'll tell it to you here—with God for my witness," Norcrosse said.

Hardly had they settled themselves in the silvery shadow for the most eventful moments of their two young lives, when the moving of the cane in the brake just back of them drew the attention of both.

"My God!" exclaimed Norcrosse as a heavy dark animal with gleaming tusks pushed through the trackless tangle. "What's that?"

"A wild boar. Run! Run! The boat!"

Rushing to the water's edge they found the boat gone—far out from the bank and turned homeward on the gentle flow.

"They're terribly ugly! Their tusks are like chopping knives. One of father's best dogs was cut clean in two by them," and Ann Leuin drew close to Norcrosse and seized his arm with both hands.

Several other wild hogs came into the open. The big boar stood looking. For a moment Norcrosse watched, thinking the animal would go back under cover. Then with no more warning than a savage snorting grunt, with head down, he charged upon them.

Catching Ann Leuin in his arms, Norcrosse turned toward the tree in whose shadow they had sat.

"Catch hold and hang tight!" he said, boosting her up toward the lowest limb. "Now, put your feet on my shoulders and pull up—hold tight—"

"He's coming—Hurry! Hurry!" Ann Leuin screamed for the charging boar had almost covered the distance between the edge of the canebrake and the tree.

The movements of both man and beast were rapid. The man had just drawn his long legs over the nearest limb when the shining tusks of the boar struck the tree, sending a shower of splinters right and left.

"Are you safe?" he asked Ann Leuin.

TREE-TOP PRISONERS

"I ought to be. I'm wedged in so tight I can't move."

"You are uncomfortable?"

"If getting cut in two is uncomfortable."

"Hold on—that brute is trying to chop the tree down. Keep holding. I'll make a chair for you—a sound, *safe* chair."

Norcrosse moved about carefully and finally found a crotch where he could sit by resting his feet on a lower support.

"Here's your chair, Ann Leuin," and he moved his hand across his knees.

"If my foot wasn't getting cut in two and my hands growing numb, I wouldn't accept. As it is, I feel like saying, 'Thank God'."

"I am saying it fervently. Was ever anything planned better than this? But for this very reason perhaps I should not say what I swore I would say."

"Maybe you won't have to. Maybe when I get done telling you I love you just as well and ten times better than you do me, you won't need to. But if you love me—*don't* let me fall."

The soft curls brushed the face of Norcrosse as Ann Leuin moved to his knees. He put his arm around her. For a moment it tightened, then with the suggestion of a sigh, relaxed.

"You must be frightened nearly to death," she said after a minute of inactive silence. "Too scared to move. I always thought when lovers got a chance they—they took it. You've told me you love me—and I knew it anyway. I've told you as plainly as I can speak that I love you and—here you sit—like a chair."

"God bless your heart!" Norcrosse said, laughing as he drew her close to him.

"That's better," she whispered. "Now I'm not afraid the angry beast will get me!"

"But Ann Leuin—listen. I must be a man. I must not take advantage of a situation to be otherwise than hon-

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orable and your father's standards of honor would not allow a man to take advantage of an unnatural situation—like this. Beside, sweet love of mine, you are but a child—a little girl. Perhaps you do not know what love—real love is."

"Child!" Ann Leuin exclaimed indignantly. "I am older than my mother was when Gus could walk! Child! I'm going on to be an old maid right now."

Norcross laughed again, a very happy laugh that sounded over the water and seemed to come echoing back in a mysterious way from the cypress swamp farther down.

"And so you don't think I know what love is—that I've got it myself? You don't know anything about the Leuins. Mother's sister in Canada has a family chart that goes back to the wars of the Eighth Civil War of France, back to the time the Huguenots were fortified in La Rochelle where Cardinal Richelieu led a siege against them. After that little difference of opinion between the Catholics and Huguenots which resulted in the death of some seventy thousand, a million of them scattered out of France—fled to the Netherlands, some to Switzerland, England, Germany, this country and the West Indies. In the general dispersion a couple of my ancestors had a love affair. He fled abroad. She followed him to the West Indies and when she got there, he was gone. It was a slow and dangerous adventure in those days. She kept on his track and found him in Canada."

"And did she marry him at last?"

"I suppose so. She was my ancestor—so was he. I just mention it to show you the kind of women folks the Leuins are when they get in love. There's no such thing as getting rid of them," and she laughed as merrily as if she were not imprisoned in a tree top and guarded by a wild beast, frothy tusked.

"In those days," Norcross said, "women's love was put to many a hard test. But what is there to test a woman's love today?"

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"Test? What's a test except something to make one know. I *already* know that I love you, Del Norcrosse."

"How do you know?"

"Three ways. I would like to put my hand against your face and say as mother does to father, 'Don't worry, dear, you have me always'."

"You darling!"

"And I know because if you should steal a thousand kisses from me not one would burn like the fire that stirs up hate and makes a woman feel disgraced forever."

"A thousand kisses!" he exclaimed. "Am I dead or dreaming?"

"You needn't try to use up the whole thousand at one time," she protested when he had seemed to make a fair start. "There's tomorrow and next year left, you know. And I want to tell you the last reason I know—a *sure* reason. Get out your pocket knife. Now cut a fine, fat letter 'A.' Use both hands. I'll not fall into the jaws of death."

Norcrosse cut the letter as directed.

"All right, now under it make an 'L'—now another one under it. What does that spell? It's my initials, Del, dear. It spells 'ALL.' Now when a woman gives her *all*—all her love, all herself, has she given all?"

"All is All," he said.

"Let me have the knife a minute. See! After the 'A' I put two dashes. That's 'Ann,' my baby name. After the first 'L' I put a dash and a dot, a dash and a dot—that's 'Leuin' my woman name. After the last 'L' I put a dot and a dash and a dot and a dash—see. This is the 'Morse code.' Father says Professor Morse is one of the most wonderful men who ever lived.

"He discovered or invented the way to make wires talk. So here it is. Let us have a code—an 'All is All' code. If we just had the great seal of the State of Mississippi, it would be legal, forever unalterable."

"I know a better seal," Norcrosse said. "Away back

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in some untimed past, my ancestors had a coat of arms. Uncle Honey says the old tribe took it from the Northern Cross formed of stars in Cygnus. I don't know about that, but I've seen the coat of arms handed down. They signed pacts with their blood in the shape of a cross. I always thought it idiotic to waste good blood making cross marks. Now I know what it meant. Once again shall the North Cross be written in blood."

With his knife he cut under the ALL a small cross until the live wood stood open deep and white. Then he turned the point of the knife to his fore arm and when a red stream met the steel, he stained the cross red saying, "Blood is blood."

"The blood of a North Cross chieftain!" she exclaimed. "Was there ever a braver lover? This is our covenant: All is All and Blood is Blood: and this is our secret code—

A — —
L—.—
L.—.—
X "

CHAPTER VIII

UNCLE HONEY'S HOBBY

LONG before the ancient blood of North Cross had been used to seal a love pact in a tree-top, Norcrosse and Ann Leuin had been missed.

After a season of patient waiting for her young mistress, Mammy went to Mrs. Laury and told what she knew. Ann Leuin had gone to the garden house to rest a few moments when some passing person carelessly closed the door. In order to climb out, the prisoner had removed her hoop skirt and leaving it for Mammy to look after, had gone for a few minutes on the water.

"It is rather strange that she would go away as she did," Mrs. Laury said. "But Ann Leuin sometimes does strange things. She will not long forget, however, that she is hostess tonight."

It was an hour after Ann Leuin had been away from her intended prison that Bresler looked at his watch and went back to make terms. A strange way to woo, but to Bresler's liking when the bottle influenced his desires and thinking.

Finding her gone and remembering he had not seen Norcrosse for some time, he returned to the pavillion and made a careful search.

Norcrosse was not to be seen. Bresler's ever ready anger rose. Where were they and why so long away together?

From the pavillion he turned to the water side to look. It was while walking here he discovered an empty boat moving in on the slow current. Rowing to it he was rewarded by finding a bunch of flowers and one of Ann Leuin's handkerchiefs in the bottom.

Hastening to Judge Laury he imparted the news of his

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discovery and was active in getting together a searching party to learn what accident had befallen the two.

So it happened that when the code had been finished and the red stain on the ancient cross was toughening to the air, far hallooming was heard. Norcrosse responded lustily. Nearer and nearer the shouts came ringing over the stillness of the water and the canebrake, but it was not until three boats drew up to shore that the big boar ended his watch and sought cover.

After the rescue Norcrosse was in high spirits for the rest of the night. But when he interviewed Judge Laury the next day a slight damper was put on his ardor.

"She is just out of school," the Judge said when asked for his daughter's hand in marriage. "I want her home a few months. Come back at Christmas and if you still love her and she still loves you as the two of you think you love now, why then I'll give you my God's blessing and pay your expenses on a European honeymoon. This is the best I can do for you, young man."

"There's no IF about it," Norcrosse said with some emphasis.

"Certainly not," Judge Laury answered, laughing.

Norcrosse had not been gone long when Bresler sought a private interview with his host.

With his one good eye fastened intently on the face of Judge Laury he said, "Yesterday your fair daughter gave me her hand—the hand I had raced to win. To cover what might have seemed an indelicate advance, she cleverly said she gave the hand of the victor to the vanquished. Since I understood, I could accept the hand on such terms as my rival refused on like terms. I now come to ask for that hand in marriage."

"Another who would be bound in the silk meshes of love?"

"Another? Has there been one before?"

"One? Has my daughter's popularity escaped your notice?"

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"Not at all—not at all. I have one only in mind—I have but one rival and he—he is not really a rival."

"I can give you no hope, for my daughter has plighted her troth to another, and if at the end of a stated period she and her lover shall be of like mind as now, my consent to the marriage is fore-promised.

"Her lover!" With the words Bresler's anger fanned up. But he controlled himself and said, "How weak is woman! How easily is her weakness preyed upon! How unfortunate that your daughter was held prisoner in a tree with a man whose sense of honor would not hesitate to lead a young female into that net from which there is no honorable escape. By all that is fair, your daughter is mine."

"Just what do you mean—what in your mind is the net into which you insinuate my daughter may have been led?" and Laury's eyes were fastened on Bresler and the lines of his mouth were not soft as he spoke.

"The net of promise made by the daughter of a man whose word has never been questioned. The net of promise, sir, made by a frightened and over-persuaded young female. A promise that should so be regarded, for though your daughter is mature in years, she is an innocent child and as such should be protected against the fatal promise, if she has given it. You are wise, sir, to insist on time before giving your consent. I do not give up hope and all is fair in love and war."

After his interview with Judge Laury, Norcrosse had gone to the city. Bresler went to his room where he kept his own valet and a borrowed slave busy with cold cloths trying to reduce the color of the eye that had collided with the "hickory bough," and here he stayed until dinner time.

Ann Leuin was never more bewitching and Norcrosse was of the gayest. There was much talk of the romantic tree-top adventure, speculation as to who shut the door of the garden house and sympathy for Bresler who bore

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in his body marks taken on by rushing through the woods trying to find Ann Leuin.

Ann Leuin expressed herself as extremely grateful to Mr. Bresler for the suffering he was enduring for her sake and her speech, though spoken like velvet, was as vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes of Bresler.

After dinner Ann Leuin paired off with Norcrosse and seeing no place for himself, Bresler complained of much pain and retired to his room.

His stay here was not long, however. When he went out he turned to the back stairs, which he descended softly, and in the yard kept within the shadows of the shrubbery as he made his way to an end of the piazza where horey-suckle vines grew thickly matted.

As he drew near this secluded spot he heard voices which he thought were those of Ann Leuin and Norcrosse. He crept closer to find his guess correct. Ann Leuin was speaking.

“ And this is what you went to Vicksburg for? ”

“ Yes—do you like it? ”

“ Like it? I love it.”

“ It is a wedding ring.”

“ How clever you are,” and she laughed. “ Father refused to let you give me an engagement ring and you give me this.”

“ Look inside, sweetheart.”

Norcrosse lighted a match. Bresler dropped his head behind a thick mat of leaves lest the flickering light should reveal his white-banded head.

“ The code! The code! ” Ann Leuin exclaimed as the light fell over the little gold band. “ My darling Del Norcrosse—here it is—our everlasting, unchangeable, eternal code. It’s exactly like that on the tree. That blessed old tree! None knows our secret but it—and trees don’t tell. I will always wear it—always until death.”

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Consumed with curiosity even greater than his anger Bresler listened for the code itself. But although it was discussed and emphasized, it was not spoken.

It was after Norcrosse had put the ring on her finger Ann Leuin said, "Where is your Uncle Honey? I want him to see my ring."

"OUR Uncle Honey," Norcrosse corrected.

"Of course—where is *our* Uncle Honey?"

"He and the Judge and Senator Thompson went on the other porch to talk politics. If they give him good ear our Uncle Honey will ride his hobby for them. Let us walk that way."

As they drew near the group of men, Norcrosse said, "Listen."

"Let the Republic beware!" The words uttered by Uncle Honey seemed surcharged with warning, colored with wrath.

"He's riding," Norcrosse said laughing.

"Good Honey has a hobby horse
As active as a flea.
His eyes be blood, his breath be fire
His name *conspiracy*."

"My, but he's in earnest. Let's listen a minute."

"Hear, gentlemen! I make the charge! There was hatched by the Austrian prince, Metternich, The Secret Treaty of Verona. Read it, gentlemen, read it! This bastard denouement that would rob Liberty of its God ordained birthright. Against a free press, free speech and for the eternal union of Church and State, this document born of autocratic powers, civil and ecclesiastical, was not intended for the public, which to this day has never heard of it. Wellington refused to have part or lot in it, nor did it take our statesmen long to see its meaning. In his message to Congress in 1823 Monroe voiced the position of the United States of which came our famous Monroe

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Doctrine. Jefferson before this had given warning against entanglement with the broils of warring autocracies of Europe. But Monroe said these powers should not ride over even the weakest power of South America were it trying to gain its independence from autocratic rule. When this cunning and devilish secret treaty found that it was out-matched by the Monroe Doctrine, it pulled another card from its Austrian sleeve—an organization known as the Leopold Foundation, born to make America an ecclesiastical autocracy. It called itself a missionary society. If you want to find out more about it read 'Conspiracy Against the Liberty of the American People' by Professor Samuel F. B. Morse, a book small in size but big in importance. Whi'e travelling in Europe and visiting in Rome, he discovered the conspiracy plot. Read it, gentlemen! Give it a hearing, this infamous Secret Treaty of Verona. Look to your histories and notice that whenever and wherever Liberty lifts its fair head from the choke damp of civil and ecclesiastical despotism, in that place the scythe of autocracy is swung and Austria rejoices. And where the arm of despotism is not long enough and strong enough to strangle Liberty, in that time and place internal dissention is stirred up and the seeds of internal disintegration are sown and cultured. Don't look at Mexico, at Ireland—at European countries. Look to our own country. Here, among us, something is working below the surface—stealthy as a black cat after a corpse, treacherous as a hungry leopard, cunning as a fox, subtle as a serpent, and in the dark, under cover of the Liberty it hates it works, stirring up strife, arraying section against section, brother against brother. For many years under cover of secrecy some such organization has been working among us. Let the Republic beware! "

"Let the Republic beware!" Ann Leuin repeated. "He looks as serious as if our fair land were to be gobbled alive by some pelican or alligator."

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“ Let’s not break into their presence while Uncle Honey is riding his hobby horse. Tomorrow you can show him the ring.”

“ Just a minute,” Ann Leuin said, listening again. “ He’s talking some more about Professor Morse. Is that the Morse that made our code? ”

“ Yes—a wonderful man is Morse.”

“ He’s talking about *our* Morse— *our* code Morse? Who knew he ever wrote a book? ”

“ Uncle Honey knows it,” Norcrosse answered laughing.

CHAPTER IX

“FOR THIS YOU SHALL PAY!”

PLANS had been made for a general exodus by the Laury house party on the day following the ball. The Hon. Jefferson Davis, one of Mississippi's favorite and most distinguished sons, was to be in Vicksburg. Both Judge Laury and Senator Thompson were not only professional, but personal friends of Mr. Davis and his short stay in Vicksburg on his way back to Washington offered opportunity for a dinner, to which the younger men of the party were invited guests.

On this same day the ladies were to attend a garden party in the city given in honor of Ann Leuin.

Bresler had entered heartily into the plan for the Davis dinner when it had been talked over before the ball. But subsequent happenings changed his desire to attend. He would not have a chance to see Ann Leuin all day. He would be thrown with Norcrosse, probably be seated near him at the table. Besides this, he now had a desire to discover the code—that bond of eternal loyalty between the lovers. What was this code? And what opportunity could be better for a visit to the tree below the Swan's Neck upon which they had said it was graven?

On the back porch after all the white people had gone, Bresler found Mammy cleaning candle holders.

“You know who I am,” he said to her.

“Yes suh—you am de one wid de poked out eye? De gem'mens all hab bofe eyes.”

Mammy put a slight accent on the word “gentlemen” that did not escape Bresler. “Gentlemen?” he repeated. “You're a fool. I am Thomas Jefferson Bresler, of Mobile. Call me by that name, I want a couple of niggers to go with me, to the lake. I'm going to fish a little.”

FOR THIS YOU SHALL PAY

"Yes suh, Mars Thomas Jef'son Bresla ob Mo-be."

"Where are they?"

"Geo'ge an' Handy am at de stable fixin' de hosses."

"Do they know how to use a gun—how to shoot?"

"Not fishes Mars Thomas Jef'son Bresla of Mo-be."

"Fishes? Who said anything about shooting fishes?"

"Ain't you done say you gwine fishin'?"

"Yes, 'I done say I gwine fishin', but can't a body go fishing and shoot a fox or cat without a load of impudence from a nigger?"

"Yes suh, Mars Thomas Jef'son Bresla of Mo-be, but de fox nor de cane-cat nor no sich varmits doan walk de water in Mississippi, Mars Thomas Jef'son Bresla of Mo-be."

"Mo-be," he said mockingly. "If I owned such a set of damn idiots as the slaves on this place, I'd kill them. Any other niggers around here can use a gun?"

"No suh, Mars Thomas Jef'son Bresla of Mo-be. De niggers mos'ly uses chunks to fight wid."

"Then I'll have George and Handy, with a couple more to paddle," and Bresler went to the stable.

An hour later the Mobile gentleman with four husky negroes was on the Swan's Neck gliding toward the edge of the canebrake and plying the slaves with all kinds of questions about the haunts and habits of wild hogs. As he neared the spot where the big tree stood, he ordered the slaves to shout, which they lustily did until the silence reverberated.

"That may let them know we're coming," he said. "Now two of you cut some canes and beat the brushes at the edge, beat and yell. You George and Handy, you stay by the tree. I'm going up that tree and don't you move two feet from it, and keep your shooting irons ready."

"Yes suh, Mars—did you say you came fishin', suh?"

"Any of your business—impudent nigger, what I came for?"

Under the tree Bresler stopped. After a moment of

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thought he said, "You niggers—hear me. I came fishing—fishing. Don't forget—*fishing*. Don't say anything about me going up this tree to anybody. Hold up your hand! Swear! And it will be hell and damnation for you if you break your oath!"

When they were sworn Bresler climbed the tree calling down, "You George get around on the other side and keep your eyes open!"

Moving to the other side, George spied a bit of lace sticking on the rough bark. He carefully removed it, put it in the top of his hat and grinned.

In the tree, Bresler's search was amply repaid for his exertion. Cut deep in the tree was the code—the three letters, one under the other and an X beneath. The letters stood out white through the thick bark. The deep-cut cross was red. Bresler studied it, copied it carefully, placed it safely in an inside pocket and did some unintelligible muttering.

On his way home from Swan Lake Bresler again impressed the four slaves that they must not tell about his examination of the tree, threatening them with all sorts of horrible fates. Especially anxious was he to keep his trip to the tree from Ann Leuin and Norcrosse. Some time, some where, he felt that he could make use of this blood-signed code to his advantage if the lovers were unaware that he possessed it.

With his solemn oath to Bresler in mind, George kept one eye on him and the other on Ann Leuin, and at the first opportunity he spoke to her. It was early in the morning the last day of the house party. The horses were at the gate and Ann Leuin was waiting for her father and Norcrosse.

"Mis' Ann Loon—"

"All right, George—what?"

"Does dem dat swears 'fore Gawd and den tells, git roasted an' skinned alive an' frowed in de swamp fer snakes and buzza'ds?"

FOR THIS YOU SHALL PAY

"Nobody is going to skin you and let buzzards eat you—but it's an awful thing to make a promise and break it."

"I isn't broke none yet. I'se not gwine break none. Does I want Mars Bresler to drown me—to hang me—to beat me—to poke out my eyes an' pull out my tongue an' feed me to de jay birds?"

"You sound crazy. What are you talking about?"

"No Mis' Ann Loon—it wasn't crazy I went—it was somewhar else, but I done been swore not to tell wha'. But there ain't nobody swore me not to give you dis," and removing his tattered hat he took from the crown a piece of lace which he gave Ann Leuin.

"George!" she exclaimed. "Where did you get this?"

"Wha' it was stuck at, Mis' Ann Loon."

"What were you doing away down at that tree?"

"I done swore not to tell."

"Was Mr. Bresler there?"

"Dat man? He went fishin'."

"Fishing?"

"Yessum, Missy, I was axed to say he went fishin' an' I was swore to say he went fishin'."

"Did he catch any fish?"

"Dey doan grow in trees lak birds do."

"He was in the tree, was he? He went fishing—alone with you?"

"Alone wid me? You doan know de gem'men Mis' Ann Loon. Fo' went wid him. Two beat de cane and yell lak de debbil was gittin' 'em. Me an' Handy walked by de tree wid de irons an' every time de canes rustled he cuss an' say we gwine let de boa's git 'im. But I done swore—swore, Mis' Ann Loon, I'se not gwine tell nothin'."

"That's right George. When you swear to keep a secret, keep it. You're a good nigger—and no fool."

"Thanks, Missy," and George grinned until his dark face shone.

It was the evening of the last day of the party that

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Bresler and Norcrosse had a farewell interview. Bresler had given up hope of having a private talk with Ann Leuin. She treated him with marked politeness, but not the slightest chance had she given him of speaking with her alone. But with Norcrosse it was different. He watched for an opportunity. It came when Norcrosse who had been sitting in the yard talking with Judge Laury, remained after his host left him, to finish his cigar before he too joined the porch party.

Bresler came around the corner and accosted him.

"Sit down, Bresler," and he moved along on the bench.

"No—and if you're a man, you'll get up."

Rising Norcrosse said, "What do you mean?"

"Just this. A year ago I asked Ann Leuin Laury to marry me. I came to this party as her guest for the purpose of getting her promise to this marriage."

"And failed to get it," Norcrosse replied, blowing smoke.

"Yes—because of you—you!"

"Think so? Think the girl you have had the hardihood to make advances to would marry a coward, a bully, a liar, had I never been born?"

"Coward! Bully! Liar! For this insult I challenge you to the code of honor."

"What insult, you damn fool? Is it an insult to call a coward a coward? Are you a coward? Are you a bully? Are you a liar? Ask Ann Leuin Laury. I know who locked her up! I know who forced his drunken familiarities on her and left by force a polluted caress to burn her pure cheek! I know the shape of the broken hickory limb that left its mark upon your evil eye—and hear me now, if you ever so much as touch her again, I'll knock both your devilish eyes to hell!"

Convulsed with anger, livid of face and tense of form, Bresler stood for the moment. "For this you shall pay," he said between set teeth. "The duel!"

FOR THIS YOU SHALL PAY

“The duel! You, *you* fight in the open! You? Not you!”

A moment Bresler stood, too furious for speech. Panting hot with anger and heavy with liquor, his breath came in gasps. Again he whispered harshly, “For this you shall pay.”

And once again Norcrosse heard the fateful words that night. Bits of gossip were being finished, for early in the morning the guests were to be away. Norcrosse and Ann Leuin had lingered for a last word on the end of the veranda where they had sat when he gave her the code ring. He had drawn her close to him for a good night kiss when, as her lips touched his, the words came from the close shadows of the thick vines like the hissing of a reptile, “For this you shall pay!”

PART TWO

CHAPTER I

“HELL’S I ELLS”

OMINOUS!

Throughout the land the growling of those ancient dogs of such warfare as has from beginning cursed mankind, was heard.

In the November election that outstanding horror, the Black Republican party, had won, and the impossible Lincoln had been elected President of the United States of America.

In December when the Senators and Representatives from eight Southern states issued addresses to their constituency urging secession for the purpose of organizing a Southern Confederacy, the dogs of war tugged at the leash and sent their deep-throated and hellish baying farther and deeper. And when South Carolina pulled the Stars and Stripes from its standard and flung it in the dust of contempt, the leash slipped and those ancient dogs scented freedom for blood and carnage.

Christmas on the Laury plantation was celebrated in the usual lavish manner. There were many guests to enjoy the parties and feasting, the eggnog and blazing puddings, many to blush and be happy under branching mistletoe. Chief among the guests was Del Norcrosse, happy as a conquering hero, for according to promise, Judge Laury had announced his engagement to Ann Leuin.

But even at this glad time, the joy of Norcrosse and his affianced was not without its cloud, for Judge Laury would consent to no definite date for the wedding on account of the threatened war. He hoped it might be June and a June wedding was planned, but over everything now brooded uncertainty,

HELL'S BELLS

The young people did not feel this and spoke of the Southern Confederacy as of something new and pleasant to be brought forth over night by the magic of statesmen at Washington. So they danced and laughed and loved at the big house, while down at the quarters the usual clothing was given out for the new year and there was eating and drinking and dancing with several broom handle weddings to furnish extra excitement and merriment.

Early in the New Year the secession of their home state threw the Laury family into an excitement which submerged Ann Leuin's dreams and plans for a June wedding or perhaps transferred it to interest in plans Gus was making for the organization of a home company to be known as the Fencibles.

What did it all portend? What was coming next?

The quick secession of Florida, Alabama, Georgia and Louisiana and Texas answered in a decisive way, and a Confederate Congress was organized in Alabama.

On the same day, in answer to the call of Virginia, twenty-one states met in a Peace Conference at Washington. The people did not want war. The people pled and prayed for peace. But war's toxic poison had been too far injected into the body social. The dogs of war bayed down the prayers.

Another excitement, mingled with pleasurable pride, came to the Laury home when on February 18th, Jefferson Davis of Mississippi was inaugurated President of the Confederate States of America at Montgomery, Alabama. The Fencibles gathered in a body for the first time, to celebrate this great event in Vicksburg, and Gus rode his horse and looked handsomer than even his proud father had ever before seen him.

While activities were at fever heat in the formation of government in the seceded states, Abraham Lincoln, newly elected President of the United States, was on his way from his home at Springfield to Washington, speaking en route,

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Being warned at Philadelphia of a plot at Baltimore to assassinate him, he made a secret night-trip to Washington where he arrived safely and rested a few days before taking up the burden of a crumbling Republic by his sacred oath as Chief Executive.

A platform had been built in front of the wide steps of the Capitol behind which the white pillars rose with the stately majesty of ancient temples. To one side of the stand an enormous "Stars and Stripes" hung high, its ends caught back so as not to obstruct the view of any portion of the humanity massed everywhere to right and left, above and below.

Early in the day the crowd had begun to gather. Washington was the centre of a Southern, slave-holding community, and after eight years of intensely Southern sway a man was to be inaugurated who was looked on as a revolutionist about to set up a new form of government which would destroy the property rights of the South and subjugate its people.

The report of the alleged attempt at assassination in Baltimore gave rise to the belief that an attempt would be made against the President on March 4th. To prevent this, unusual precautions were taken. The ostensible director of military protection was General Scott who rode about the city in a low coupé drawn by a powerful horse. The real director of military operations was Colonel Stone of the regular army who had a battalion of the United States Engineer Corps directly in the rear of the President's carriage and sharpshooters belonging to a German company posted on all buildings along the route. Orders had been given to keep a vigilant watch as the President's carriage approached and to fire at any one who might aim a weapon at the President. There was also a large force of detectives stationed along the route and at the Capitol.

The crowd grew—surged in front of the Capitol and crowded for space. The mighty steps behind the stand filled with men—an animated background, serious-faced,

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with oftentimes the shaking of a head, and sometimes a half-choked muttering, for here were statesmen who had known slavery as an American institution since the founding of the Republic. Here were men who had served their country through long lives of loyalty and devotion since it broke from the autocracy of an old order and shouted its Declaration of Independence. Here were diplomats of foreign embassies, pledged to the divine rights of kings, glad in their hearts that the theory of self-government was at last to be proven the heresy of civilization by the division of the Union.

While the throng was gathering to the clatter of cavalry and the tramp of militia; while platoons of soldiers were taking their stations along the Avenue, riflemen were posting themselves on roof-tops and cavalymen were getting into guard line at every approach from the side streets—while all this was going on in the open, a scene of unmeasured solemnity was in progress in the Senate Chamber. The Senate had been in session throughout the night. Morning found its members weary, sleepy, sullen as they awaited the coming of the President-elect.

At the head of the procession, making its way to the Capitol, rode Abraham Lincoln in an open carriage with President Buchanan, and on the arm of this aged Chief Executive, he entered the Senate Chamber.

In the open the Judges of the Supreme Court had taken their places, a small table with a glass of water stood in the centre of the platform and all eyes watched for a sight of the god or monster as one considered him, who was to stand close before the little table and perhaps sip water from the glass on it.

At last he came, his tall, ungainly figure easily distinguishable above the mass of men he made his way through. Since he had been in Washington before, he had grown a beard which, meeting the edges of his hair, made a sombre circle about his face which was deeply cut with lines, and

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his dark and deep-set eyes looked out from shadows cast by their own deepness.

His introduction was marked by a few faint cheers, but his face lit with a smile as genial as if he had been heralded approvingly by the curious throng. For a moment he stood as if undecided where to put his tall silk hat and gold-headed cane. The first was placed under the table, Senator Douglas, sitting near by, took the latter.

A hush fell on the throng. Pledged as he was to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution and the Union, every ear was strained to catch his words.

In his farewell address to Congress, Jefferson Davis said of the Stars and Stripes, "When it shall no longer be the common flag of the country, it shall be folded up and laid away, like a vesture no longer used; it shall be kept as a sacred memento of the past to which each of us can make a pilgrimage and remember the glorious days in which we were born." Here now stood a man representing forces which said, "*It shall not be laid away like a vesture! It shall not come to be some sacred memento of the glorious days in which the Republic was born, for that Republic shall not die!*"

Such a document was never before listened to as the vast concourse heard that day and even those whose hearts muttered curses, kept quiet as he spoke.

"A disruption of the Federal Union, heretofore only menaced, is now formidably attempted. I hold that in the contemplation of universal law and of the Constitution the Union of these States is perpetual. Perpetuity is implied if not expressed in the fundamental law of all national governments. It is safe to say that no government proper, ever had a provision in its organic law for its own termination." On this premise his address was founded and in an exhaustive manner was the crucial situation discussed. As he neared the end, his listeners waited as if for the climax of a drama and silence settled deep as he said, "If it were admitted that you who are dissatisfied hold the right

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side of the dispute, there is still no single reason for precipitate action. Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land, are still competent to adjust, in the best way, all our present difficulties. In your hands my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without yourselves being the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the Government while I shall have the most solemn one to 'preserve, protect and defend' it. I am loath to close. We are not enemies but friends. *We must not be enemies.* Though passion may have strained, it must not break the bonds of affection. The mystic cords of memory, stretching from every battle field and patriot grave to every living heart and hearth stone all over this broad land will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely it will be by the better angels of our natures."

Among those who had elbowed their way within easy hearing distance of the new President were two men and a woman. One man, who stood close behind the other man and the woman, was Del Norcrosse. His attention was for the moment diverted from the inauguration speech by the man and woman directly in front.

"The damn nigger-loving liar!" the man said under his breath of the new President.

"Sh-sh, John," the woman whispered. "Take this and remember where you are," and she held a small "Stars and Stripes" toward him.

Snatching it from her, the man crushed and tore, and then spat upon it, after which he dropped it and ground it under his heel. "So much for *his*, and him if I could," he muttered.

Somewhat irritated by the interruption, Del Norcrosse moved so that he could see what this rabid Southern sym-

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pathizer called "John" looked like. He saw a slender, young fellow, thin-featured and angry. The woman had a mouth which puckered like a pocket book around a draw string. He remembered this later.

Abraham Lincoln!

His inaugural statement that the Government would assail no one and conflict could only be brought about if the dissatisfied turned aggressor, was answered by Beauregard and his seven thousand secessionists who turned their guns against Fort Sumter with its garrison of seventy.

The message came to the President, "They have fired on Sumter!"

Five words—but charged and recharged with dynamic force. The American Flag had been assailed, not by some foreign autocratic power, but by its own children. Around the White House excitement ran high and higher as the wires brought in the news. "Bombardment began at 4.30 A.M.—Continued all day—Partially suspended at nightfall—Rebels fired at intervals through the night—Sumter silent—April 13 firing resumed—Eight o'clock officers' quarters struck by shell—Ten o'clock flag struck down—Immediately raised—Noon, woodwork on fire—Sumter's guns silenced—Cartridges gone—One P. M., flagstaff shot away—flag nailed to piece and displayed from ramparts—Flag of truce at 12.55."

And then news to the President that after thirty-four hours, the brave defense of the little garrison who had fought in sheets of flame and under a rain of shot and shell, faced the inevitable, marched out and saluted the bullet ridden flag of the Union with fifty guns as it was lowered from its staff.

The fall of Fort Sumter was the occasion of wild rejoicing throughout the seceded states. But louder than the reverberations of the deep-throated cannon of the South, the blare of trumpets, the ringing of bells, the shouting

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of ten thousand throats around blazing bonfires, sounded the voice of Abraham Lincoln calling like a resurging wave for 75,000 troops for the defense of the Union for three months.

Surely within three months this threatened conflict, this madness of those who would disrupt the Union, would be over, and Congress was summoned to convene on the 4th of July.

This proclamation was like the first peal of a surcharged thunder cloud clearing the murky air, and was followed in ten thousand cities and hamlets by the sound of the drum and fife which struck sharply on the air and set the blood tingling and the breath coming fast. The Stars and Stripes that had been shot down was lifted by a multitude and displayed on poles and staffs and house-tops and from windows everywhere throughout the North. In old Faneuil Hall, Boston, that cradle of man's long dreamed liberty, volunteers were blocked by the throngs, and the starry standard was cheered as they marched. Old men shouted, "God bless it!" Young men shouted, "We will fight for it!" Women cried, "We will pray for it!" and children clapped their hands.

In Fredericksburg the celebration over the downfall of the Flag was great. Moved by pain and anger Editor Honeycutt wrote for his paper, "Since the telegraphic report of the surrender of Fort Sumter reached Fredericksburg the greatest excitement has prevailed. On receipt of the news guns were fired, soldiers paraded the streets, speeches were delivered, cheers were given and the doleful 'tiger groans' fell upon our ears like the deep mutterings of demons coming up from the regions of despair. At night bonfires were kindled as if the actors in the drama were eager for light to see the downfall of the Republic and the departure of a nation's glory! Thoughtless children in their ignorance may laugh and skip and play while a dying mother

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lingers on the verge of eternity. But as soon as the spirit takes its flight into the deep abyss unknown, and the cold, lifeless body is laid low and covered in the deep, dark, silent grave and the children wake up to find themselves scattered, homeless, penniless, friendless, thrown on the cold charity of a heartless world, they know their loss. In like manner men make merry now while our blessed country, the mother of us all, is convulsed and agonizing in the last throes of existence. Merry with savagery, as if it were a joy to dance upon her grave. So her ungrateful children will wake up to the sad reality that we have no Country The downfall of our Country and the inauguration of civil war seems to us like the madness of men walking, alive, wide awake, into eternity. The thought is terrible beyond conception. Angels might weep and heaven veil herself in sackcloth and ashes at the downfall of a country like ours. Could our own life be substituted as a sacrifice for the salvation of our blessed country, freely and quickly would the sacrifice be made! Conspiracy! Is there a conspiracy? Are not Hell's bells tolling the death-knell of the Republic? God! Let the Republic beware—beware before it is forever too late! ”

The *Fredericksburg Herald* had long been taken by Judge Laury. This editorial read aloud called for discussion.

Gus was in New Orleans purchasing handsome regalia for the Fencibles but Mrs. Laury and Ann Leuin were ready to discuss it.

“ He still holds to his idea of a conspiracy,” Mrs. Laury said.

“ Conspiracy? Yes on the part of the North to subjugate the South—on the part of Black Republicans to destroy us.”

“ But Uncle Honey surely will not go with the North against us— ” Ann Leuin said.

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“ No indeed. Honeycutt is a Southerner. All his interests are in the South. He comes **from** slave-owning families and has never made a fight on slavery. A great many of our statesmen and some of our editors opposed secession. A great many of our people have been against it as shown in their conventions. Robert E. Lee, of Virginia, adored by our Gus, is against it, yet if Virginia should go out—as it will—Honeycutt and Lee will go with it. They can do nothing else.

“ And Del—my dear, sweet, darling Del Norcrosse? ”

Judge Laury laughed as he said, “ Do you think he could stand in battle array against the belle of Mississippi? ”

CHAPTER II

“ DEEP, DARK AND DAMNABLE! ”

“ THE conspiracy! The conspiracy! Virginia crucified! ”

James Honeycutt pushed the fingers of his two hands through his hair and clasped his head as if it were about to get away from him.

“ My God! Boy! God—I knew it—I knew it! I told you so! ”

It was the night of April 17. Virginia had that day seceded. Del Norcrosse was just home from Washington where he had been since the inauguration and was full of news, for the Capital was in a turmoil and he had much to tell before leaving for Baltimore the next day.

But of all the burning subjects for discussion none was so vitally interesting just now as the outcome of the conflict in the Old Dominion where opposing forces battled for and against the Union. Knowing his uncle's strong Union position and his long time charge of a conspiracy to destroy the liberties of the masses by destroying the Union, Del Norcrosse was not surprised at the high tension he found the older man in.

“ Did the people of Virginia want war? Did the people of Virginia want to secede? ” Honeycutt shouted. “ God no! They voted 60,000 strong to stay in the Union, and here come these traitors, these political rascals from far and near, hold a secret meeting and send out the news that the PEOPLE of Virginia have turned rebels! With the majority for the Union, it did not seem possible that Virginia could be dragged out of the Union? But we were deceived! Virginia was lied to, swindled and forced out of the Union! Never was there a more damnable act of political villany and rascality imposed on any people since God made the

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world, than has been imposed on the people of Virginia! Why were the leaders in this damnable treasonable act afraid to submit the question to the people? Hear! They were afraid—they *knew* the people would overthrow their nefarious plot to destroy popular Democratic government. This is the only legitimate reason these arch-conspirators forced their diabolical plot in the dark. When these scheming leaders were before the people asking for their votes, they loudly proclaimed that all power was lodged in the people. But when the appointment hour had come for the overthrow of the Government, which the people themselves had created, the creatures became superior to the creator. These are historical facts which, black, infamous and damnable as they are, the ever-rolling stream of time will carry down to the latest posterity. And when the war is on and blood runs red and taxation for future generations piles high, they will have the unblushing impudence to say 'It was the *people's* war,' An infamous libel on the people. The people never got it up. Accursed politicians and demagogues got it up. But never while I have brains to think, a heart to feel, a tongue to speak, a hand to write and a soul to save will I become the dupe of fools, cowards, knaves and traitors, nor tamely submit to the gag law of any political or ecclesiastical confederation or party this side of eternity! "

Honeycutt wiped his forehead and sat down.

" You are right, Uncle Honey—right! The forcing of Virginia out of the Union is the dirtiest, boldest act of rascality recorded in history. No—Virginia didn't want to go out! Why should she? Slaves here are only worth \$300. Seven slave-holding states where slaves are worth \$2,000, and cotton is the staple, have pulled out of the Union. They want more strength. The golden prize was Old Dominion. She is out. She is out by conspiracy. But this larger conspiracy you swear exists—the conspiracy of which this is an outbreak—the cause of which this is effect—I don't see it."

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“ Don’t see it? Well, boy, keep your eyes and ears open and your mouth shut and if I can’t make you see it, something else will. I’ll admit I have done some speculating. But the moving hand has shown itself—the deadly hand of autocracy that smells to heaven of Austria and the Secret Treaty of Verona.”

“ The Secret Treaty of Verona again? ”*

“ Again? Yes, and forever it should be shaken in the face of the American people’s love of liberty when their knees grow weak and their spines turn to string. Just a minute—a minute! ”

Uncle Honey stepped with quick, wiry tread to a locked drawer and took out some papers which he unfolded as he recrossed the room.

“ Yes—here it is—I’ll read just a few lines—‘ The high contracting powers . . . engage mutually in the most solemn manner to use all their efforts to put an end to the system of representation government . . . the liberty of the press is the most powerful means used by the pretended supporters of the rights of nations . . . we adopt proper measures to suppress it . . . convinced that the principles of religion contribute most powerfully to keep nations in the state of passive obedience which they owe to their princes, the high contracting parties declare it their intention to sustain in their respective states those measures which the clergy may adopt . . . give thanks to the Pope for what he has already done for them and solicit his constant co-operation in their views of submitting the nations . . . this treaty shall be renewed with such changes as new circumstances may give occasion for.’ Just a few lines from the Secret Treaty of Verona I have read you. An open and fairly powerless combine called the Holy Alliance drew England in for a time. The Duke of Wellington balked at this treaty and got out . . . The Holy Alliance—the familiar name of this secret document, made its powers felt by the

* American Diplomatic Code, 1778-1884, Vol. II; Elliot, p. 179; Congressional Record; April 25, 1916, p. 7730-7731.

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wholesale drastic suppression of the press in Europe, by universal censorship, by killing free speech and all ideas of popular government. Having destroyed popular government in Spain and Italy, it had well laid plans to destroy popular government in the American colonies which had revolted from Spain and Portugal in South America—but dig into history and get it. It's all there."

Del Norcrosse laughed as he said, "Why should I spend time digging into history? Don't I know it by heart? Didn't the great English statesman Channing call the attention of our statesmen to it? Didn't Thomas Jefferson get busy and prod President Monroe and between them didn't the Monroe Doctrine come into being? Sure! Then when the self-appointed ordainers and preservers of divine rights of popes and princes were checkmated by the Monroe Doctrine they devised the Leopold Foundation as a missionary society to convert the heathen to the salvation of divine rights. Fifteen times, my dear Uncle Honey, you have read me about this organization from the work entitled 'Foreign Conspiracy Against the Liberties of the United States' by the eminent Samuel F. B. Morse whose Morse code I endorse." Norcrosse laughed. Then he continued, "From this work you have read me at least fifteen times how much money this missionary child of the Secret Treaty obtained in our country for its divine rights missionary effort—I know it all, dear Uncle. But how does your ancient conspiracy link up with the secession of Virginia."

"Conspiracy? What else could it be? Look here! Listen! This is a circular which was widely distributed. It was printed in Richmond, 'Your presence is particularly requested at Richmond on the—day of '—it begins. It is a call for the elect to meet in Richmond to decide what course Virginia should pursue with instructions to whom to report upon arriving at Richmond. Why this mysterious rendezvous at Richmond and this too during the session of the convention? Why were large numbers of this infamous call sent out? Who got them? Why was the date of this

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secret meeting left blank? Were the damnable traitors and conspirators afraid there would be a ground swell of Union men on hand? What do you make of all this, anyway, except one of the blackest plots to destroy this Western Republic ever found in the records of the world's history?" and Uncle Honey pounded the table with a tightly clenched fist.

"Everybody, except a few poor fools, knows the whole thing is a plot. What I'm trying to get at is this—and let's keep to the subject; you charge a foreign conspiracy as ancient as the Secret Treaty of Verona. The Leopold Foundation grew out of it—so you charge. Now—is it this Leopold Foundation that is at work under the social surface to set section against section, brother against brother in civil war? If not, where did this Leopold Foundation go and what takes its place?"

"Ah! Ah! Here—here—look—listen," and he held an open paper book before Norcrosse. "See? Get it? The Knights of the Golden Circle! And we learn there are one hundred and twenty thousand sworn, secret members to stand by secession, fully organized—a secret military organization that can be brought fully equipped for action in two weeks! DO YOU GET IT? This, back of the secret plotters who betrayed Virginia into the hands of rebels and traitors—My God, boy!"

Del Norcrosse kept his eyes on the paper. He turned the book over and looked as if scarce believing what he saw.

"The Norfolk 'Day Book' December 1860. Pretty up-to-date evidence, boy."

Norcrosse looked again, read again and said slowly, "A secret military organization, drilled, ready for action in two weeks! It seems impossible!"

"Lord in Heaven, boy! How could such things as are happening be possible *without* this diabolical thing—this agency to work to disrupt and destroy our free government, damn free speech—"

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"But I don't understand—where is it? How is it? What is it? Who is it? Why hasn't it been uncovered?"

"It's not its nature to work in the open. It has to be uncovered and dealt with as a venomous reptile. You will see! I knew it—I knew it! Here is the proof—the Knights of the Golden Circle—eh, boy?"

The day after his visit to his uncle, Norcrosse seated himself in a Baltimore restaurant facing a mirror. In this mirror he saw a woman's face with a pocket-book mouth.

Turning he saw on the opposite side of the room at a table, the woman he had noticed at the inauguration. She was conversing with the man she had called "John," who had spat upon the Union flag.

Norcrosse seated himself where, in the mirror he could see the table across the room. The couple was deeply interested in some papers lying before them. This common interest seemed to be of a private nature as the woman cast a wary eye on everyone who passed the table and the hand of the man slid over the papers several times as passers chanced to hesitate close to them. Evidently also, they were watching for someone, proving to be an elderly man of quiet manner, who came in shortly. He wore a closely cropped beard, partly grey, and gold-rimmed nose glasses with a black silk cord going back over his ear. He stopped by the table long enough for a few words of conversation with the man to whom he slipped an envelope. He then crossed the room, sat down by Norcrosse and opened a newspaper he had been carrying under his arm.

"Virginia's out," the stranger remarked.

"Yes—and what are the damn Yankees going to do about it?"

The man laughed and said, "Don't love the Yankees?"

"I am a Virginian," Norcrosse said proudly.

"And that *should* mean something—should mean *everything*. Yet as a matter of fact, sixty thousand Virginians voted Union men to the Convention."

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“ Union shriekers—Black Republicans—Lincolnists! ” and with the words an expression of supreme contempt marked the face of Norcrosse.

Again the stranger laughed as if well pleased.

“ The first Massachusetts Sixth is on its way to Washington,” he announced after having glanced at the paper again.

“ First Yankee fighters to answer the President’s call? ”

“ Yes—first to answer black Abe’s call for men to subjugate the South. They will be through here tomorrow.”

“ Tomorrow? Here in Baltimore?”

“ Here in Baltimore. New York went crazy over them and Philadelphia gave them a great reception. So will Baltimore give these nigger-loving Yankees a reception.”

“ Good! I’d like to see it done.”

“ Really? Wish I knew something so I could give you some instructions. But I don’t live here. However, I heard a fellow say things would be interesting around the head of Gay Street along about noon—down at the dock not far from Smith’s Wharf.”

The stranger had no more information to offer and after glancing over his paper he got up and went out. Norcrosse noticed he had eaten nothing nor did he once look toward the couple at the opposite table.

As he finished his coffee, Norcrosse looked again in the mirror. The man called “ John ” was tearing up a piece of paper. The woman opened her bag to catch the pieces, one of which fluttered unnoticed to the floor. When they had gone out Norcrosse went to the table, ordered coffee, picked up the paper. Evidently it had been a part of a list of drugs. The word “ quinine ” was intact and there were portions of other words suggesting valuable contraband and some ciphers he thought might be part of a code. Norcrosse put the paper in his pocket. Just what the three strangers were up to he did not even guess, but he knew they were

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rabid Southern sympathizers and his conversation with the man who sat at his table was framed to learn something. This he had not done unless events transpired next day in connection with the Massachusetts Sixth.

The troop trains drew into Baltimore shortly before ten and at noon the next day Norcross found himself one of a motley and excited crowd gathered near the Gay Dock. It took him but a very few moments to discover that the crowd, mob-like in appearance and action, was against the Union—so strongly that they cursed Abraham Lincoln, the Stars and Stripes, the Government and all concerned.

Near the wharf there was a large pile of anchors. He noticed that a number of muscular men kept close about it. At one side of the road there was a heap of cobble stones that had been taken from a roadway. Here too, were eager men.

Shouting in the distance announced the coming of the Sixth Massachusetts' Regiment. The Gay Street Wharf crowd waited eagerly with half breathed curses which, when the soldiers came into sight broke into hisses. Then ready hands dragged the anchors across the way, piled them high and as the soldiers paused at the temporary barricade, stones were shot into them with curses. Before the soldiers fired, a brawny-armed man snatched down the Stars and Stripes and hoisted a Confederate Flag. This was the signal for a fight. Guns flashed, missiles and rocks flew through the air. There were screams, curses, shots and red blood.

When the onslaught was finally stopped the Flag of the Republic still waved but a number of the soldiers lay dead on the street.

The Governor of Massachusetts wired that the bodies of the Union soldiers be sent tenderly home. At the funeral which was attended by vast numbers, the drums that had done service at the battles of Lexington and Bunker Hill

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were beaten at the head of the funeral escort, and a general spirit of 1776 grew out of this first bloodshed.

All wires were cut leading into Washington from the North and all bridges burned so that no news could be gotten from the loyal North. Meantime the camp fires of the vast Confederate armies on the south of the Potomac could be seen glaring like the eyes of some fated destroyer.

Norcrosse had seen the first red bloodshed of the oncoming deluge of war. He wondered who the elderly stranger was who knew what was about to happen.

CHAPTER III

GREY AGAINST BLUE

WHEN in response to President Lincoln's call in May for 500,000 volunteers, 700,000 voices shouted back "We're coming, Father Abraham," Del Norcrosse was of the army that closed desks, put aside books, laid down tools and left plow to take up the gun and sword.

The flag of the Confederacy floated on the bluffs across the Potomac River and vast armies of determined secession soldiers under expert generalship were massing and moving, and menacing the Union's Capital.

The outpouring response to the President's call for more men established the questioned stability of the Union and again there was hope that the war would soon be over.

This was before Bull Run.

The Union army of Bull Run was made up of volunteers who had enlisted to end the war in three months, most of these fighting men having never smelled gun powder, and as they went to meet the enemy they went as if a great victory were already theirs accompanied by Congressmen, reporters, non-combatants in carriages, on horseback and in omnibuses—all who could muster government passes—to see the South humiliated and put to rout. But when after a furious battle of thirteen hours without respite, weary and hungry and famished for food and water, ten thousand fresh enemy troops were thrown suddenly upon them, the result was not retreat—it was panic. Turning their faces to Washington they fled, a crazed and rushing mob. Men in regiments, men in groups, men alone—army wagons—ambulances—riderless horses snorting and foaming—thundering artillery crushing anything that chanced to be along its pathway. Long before the terror-stricken host reached safety, torrents of rain began falling, drenching the fugitives

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and adding to the gloom. Yet on—on—on—they poured over Long Bridge like a dark and turbid stream at flood tide, leaving its trail of abandoned wagons, cannon, supplies, arms and equipment and even wounded and dead, along the way. Not before had a more ignominious retreat been recorded in civilized warfare.

For a time after news of the disaster was spread abroad, the people of the North seemed dazed. Then they awoke their dream of invincible power at last broken. It was gigantic warfare they were engaged in against an enemy of magnificent size and spirit. To accomplish success, Congress gave the President \$500,000,000 and full war power.

But if Bull Run had its sobering effect on the North, its effect on the South was exhilarating. Especially in Mississippi, whose proud son was President of the new Confederacy, was there great rejoicing. Gus had returned from New Orleans glowing with the war spirit and spent his time drilling with the Fencibles and keeping close watch on war news. Elated by the victory of Bull Run, which only stopped short of taking Washington itself, Gus was impatient to join the army that was to finish the brilliant victory begun.

Ann Leuin had received weekly letters from Del Norcrosse, each succeeding missive being read with more eagerness to learn his war plans. He had referred to preparations for the war and told much interesting and exciting news. He had spoken of business in Washington, but had not said definitely what he was doing. As often as Ann Leuin spoke of the matter, her father assured her that Norcrosse was all right on the war.

It was shortly before the Fencibles were ready to go away that Ann Leuin received a letter which brought a cold, hard frown to her father's face, a look of pained anxiety to her mother, and threw Ann Leuin herself into a day's weeping.

"Tell your father," Norcrosse wrote, "I am with the Union, though every sentiment would draw me the other

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way. I make the decision and my sense of reason and justice tells me I am right. It came in thinking over the action of Mayor Fernando Wood of New York City. He sent a message to the common council advising that New York should secede and become a free city. I have also heard that the Governor of at least one of the seceded states proposes to secede from the other seceded states unless certain of its demands are conceded. This leads me to believe secession is not a sound policy. If carried to a sorry conclusion we will have instead of a Union, thirty-eight little states—an invitation to the foreign autocratic powers of Europe to gobble us as big fish do little ones. In Union there is strength. Another determining factor has been a consideration of the money which makes the secession of at least three of the states seem dishonest. Our Government spent a vast amount of money on these—Florida, Louisiana and Texas. We paid France for Louisiana \$15,000,000, with over \$8,000,000 interest. Paid Spain \$5,000,000 for Florida with over \$1,000,000 interest. Texas boundary, \$10,000,000, another \$10,000,000 for indemnity for creditors, last Congress, \$7,500,000. Other expenses on these three states for protection, wars, pensions, etc., make a total of \$618,000,000 cost to ALL the states. Should these states be allowed to pull themselves away from that Union that purchased and protected them at such a cost? It doesn't seem so to me. Ask your good and wise father what he thinks about it? "

This was all the reference to the war. The love and lonesomeness of the June a month gone, which was to have seen a wedding day was dwelt on. " But before another June comes this tragedy war will be over," he wrote, " and then the orange blossoms. You wanted some hard test. Will this time of waiting be hard enough? "

For a week before Gus was to depart Ann Leuin watched for a chance to speak with him alone, but so busy was he, she had no opportunity until the day before he left. Finding him alone she threw her arms around him, kissed him, but before she could speak was crying.

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“ What’s the matter with my sweet, darling sister? ” Gus said, putting his arms around her.

“ Brother—oh my brother,” she sobbed, “ I don’t want you to go to war! War is to kill and to be killed. But if you must—if you will—make me one promise—one promise before God!”

“ All right—sure—what is it? ”

“ Don’t kill Del Norcrosse.”

“ Kill Del Norcrosse? What a notion! I wouldn’t hurt him for the world.”

“ But you are on one side and he on the other. I have written him to promise he will not kill you and I want you to promise me as much. Father is terribly displeased because he stayed with the Union. Oh, Gus—how sad—how terrible it is to be on different sides! ”

“ Yes, he’s made a mistake—I can’t understand. But I won’t kill him. I promise. This war will not last long—it *can’t*. And when the North has been soundly thrashed for putting a brute like Abe Lincoln in the president’s chair, the killing will cease. If Lincoln had not been elected, there wouldn’t have been any war. I’ll promise not to kill Del Norcrosse but don’t ask me to promise not to kill that war-hatching black Republican president if he gets his ugly head within shooting range.”

It was an exciting time when Gus left for war. The house slaves had gathered and as the company came up the long gravel drive the negroes shouted “ Hooray fur de Fencibl’s! Hooray for Mars Gus! Gawd bress our Mars Gus! De Yanks doan know what gwine git ’em! ”

When Mammy first caught sight of him she exclaimed, “ Bress Gawd! Did you ebber see anyt’ing mo’ han’somer dan our Mars Gus, wid de plume noddin’ an’ de buttons shinin’ an’ him struttin’ roun’ wid all de contrapshums sojers wea’s? I sho is proud ob Mars Gus.”

“ But Mammy, he is going away—just now—as soon as he tells us farewell. He is on his way to war. Oh Mammy,

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think of it! And you know when they go to war—" and Mrs. Laury's voice broke in a sob.

"Doan now Li'l' Missy—doan feel lak dat. Doan you know de good Gawd gwine stay close to our Mars Gus? Doan you know de wing ob de A'mi'ty what you sing about gwine be spread ober dat boy so no ha'm doan come nigh? Doan cry. Taint no good sen'—off fer de boy to see his Li'l' white mammy cryin'."

"You are right Mammy. I am going to be brave for the boy's sake and trust him to the care of God."

Mrs. Laury gave her eyes a swift thrust with her handkerchief and went forward with a smile as Gus and Judge Laury entered the room. Gus hastened to his mother's side and threw his arms around her saying, "Are you proud of me, mother of mine?"

"Proud of you, my big boy—my darling little boy? Am I proud of you?" and she threw her arms around his neck.

He pressed her close then said to Mammy, "Take good care of her—hear Mammy, good care of my mother."

"Yes, Mars Gus, I hea's. Gawd bress you, Mars Gus! O Mars Gus, good-bye!"

"Good-bye—good-bye, Mammy. You're the best old Mammy a boy ever had and I'll not forget you."

George, who had been standing aside from the other slaves, suddenly came forward and threw himself at the feet of Gus crying, "Oh Mars Gus—doan lebe me! I sho is gwine die ef you does. I'se done been yo' nigger sence you was borned. I fan de flies offen yo' cradle w'en you was so li'l' a bref could have blowed you away. I'se watched you an' toted you, an' fed you an' nussed you! Lem'me go wid you!"

"But war is no place for you, George."

"Yes suh, ef you am dere hit am. I'se big and strong. I can tote de stuff and cook de grub an' mebbby—mebbby I might sometime stan' twixt you an' de gun ob some Yank.

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Lem'me go! I doan want you goin' off whar Mars Linkum kills 'em all 'lone! "

Gus looked down on the pleading slave a moment then turning to his father said, " He might be handy."

" He is yours, my son."

" Get up, George. You shall go."

George arose. There was a moment of silence. The time for parting was at hand.

" Go back to your work," Judge Laury said to the gaping slaves, and when they had gone he said, " My boy, the time has come."

Gus stood a moment irresolute, then stepped toward his mother. As she lifted her face to his he cried, " Mother, don't look like *that*—please don't. If you do I'll sit down and cry like a baby and go out to the boys with red eyes. Don't take it to heart—it's only for a little time."

Mrs. Laury turned to Mammy and spoke very quietly. " Mammy, Gus is going now. Get the little Bible."

From a nearby desk the old slave took the book and handed it to her mistress who held it out to Gus.

" Take it with you, my boy, as a reminder that your mother, night and day, is praying God to be with you 'til we meet again. Good-bye—Good-bye."

She dropped her head against his breast. Gus put his arms around her. Ann Leuin threw her arms around her brother, the Judge reached around them all and thus they stood with bowed heads, the family group before the breaking. There was no sharp crying nor wild clinging. There was inward sobbing and deep praying, but Judge Laury's voice was steady and natural as he said, " All right Gus—we're going now."

A moment later the sound of fife and drum was heard again mingled with the shouting of negroes. From the piazza Mrs. Laury and Ann Leuin waved handkerchiefs and from the rear Mammy watched the vanishing Fencibles.

When Mrs. Laury turned back into the room she found Mammy weeping in her apron.

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“ Mammy, Mammy! Were you not just now telling me to be brave? ”

“ Yes, Li'l' Missy, but dat was fo' he lef'. He am gone now an' I'se all broke up. An' doan you know, Missy, you can't nebber make yo' ol' black Mammy t'ink hit right for boys lak our Mars Gus to go to no sich tur'bl place lak wa'.”

“ War is terrible, Mammy. But even war must be some part of God's plan or it would not be.”

“ Dat so't ob Gawd what wants chilluns borned to be used up in wa' might suit white pussons, but hit doan be yo' Mammy's kin.' Doan I 'member lak hit was las' night—dat longest, blackes' night I ebber seed w'en Mars Gus was borned? Hab I fergot Missy, de suff'rin an' mis'ry what you was in dat night twell de doctor he got skeered an' say he mus' hab mo' he'p? You white pussons may hab a Gawd what wants white mammies to born boys lak you borned Mars Gus for wa.' But yo' ol' black Mammy done sot in her min' dat boys borned an' raised lak our Mars Gus, is wo'th mo' dan to stan' in a row an' be shot by dem Yanks what ol' Mars Linkum sen' out. 'Tain't right Missy—'tain't right! An' now he's gone! ”

“ Gone—gone? Yes, he has gone. Oh, Mammy—just gone and even now I want to look down the road to see him coming home. I shall watch that road daytimes and in my dreams, but Mammy—perhaps—perhaps though I watch until my hair is white, I will never see him again! ”

“ Doan cry no mo'. Hit hurt yo' Mammy's hea't,” and taking the handkerchief from Mrs. Laury's hand the old negro wiped the face of her mistress gently and crooned in a soothing voice, “ Doan cry—he am comin' home ag'n—home ag'n.”

CHAPTER IV

“ YOU ARE THE TRAITOR ! ”

“ TALK to me, father—talk to me ! ”

It was Ann Leuin whose voice trembled with pathetic pleading as she sat on Judge Laury's knee and leaned her head against his shoulder.

“ Ever since the letter came telling us our dear, dear Del made the mistake of staying with the Union, you have treated me as if I had done something wrong—I have been banished from your old-time love, as you used to banish me when I was little and was naughty,” and she dropped her head against his shoulder and sobbed.

“ Poor child,” Judge Laury said pushing back the golden curls and pressing his lips to her forehead. “ You have done nothing wrong. As to Del Norcrosse—the question is a vexing one as to where mistakes leave off and crime begins, for a crime of such stupenduous magnitude as the human mind can not encompass is this war, and responsibility rests somewhere.”

“ I thought the responsibility all rested on that Black Republican Abe Lincoln; I thought *he* was the cause of the war—you have said so.”

“ He is—that is, there would have been no war except for his election. Still his minions do the fighting; other vassals of his dark designs furnish supplies, manufacture and print lies and scatter false opinion. For years the Fredericksburg *Herald* has been a leader of thought—its editor my life-long friend. He is no Abolitionist. He is Southern and all his interests are identified with Southern institutions. He was born in the Old Dominion. His parents were born in Virginia, they and their ancestors were slave holders. He believes in slaves. He should be using his genius—the far-reaching influence of his paper for the

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sacred cause of the South. Instead, hear him," and Judge Laury took up a paper. "The whole scheme of secession is the most wicked, diabolical and infernal scheme for undermining liberty and assassinating a free country ever set on foot. Traitors have even stood on the floor of the American Senate proclaiming treason for which they should have been hanged, and would, had the laws of the land been enforced—drawing nine dollars a day for their part in the destruction of the very freedom our fathers sealed with their blood. No mad dog cry of the invasion of the sacred soil of the South by the vandals of the North can blind honest eyes nor shift responsibility from its devilish source. No man need talk to me of the unnatural and fratricidal and horrible war Lincoln is waging. I did not vote for Lincoln. But because we have a president we do not want, is THAT any sane excuse for disrupting our government and setting up a vile rebellion? Any reason why Southern fire-eaters and Northern Abolitionists should attempt regal ruin and national desolation? Yet shall it never come, for when the last gun is fired and the last crimson wave shall wash the last battlefield, then will this blessed Republic of ours stand like a towering mountain after the last deluge, majestic, magnificent, immutable. Since the South in her madness has seen fit to make of herself a commonwealth of traitors by following leaders who have made the issue 'No Union and slavery, or no slavery and a Union,' then I am for the Union though every institution in it perish and we begin again to build Freedom's divine institutions. If it had been possible two or three years ago to select about three hundred of your abominable anti-slavery agitators in the North and an equal number of God-forsaken hell-deserving disunionists in the South, and marched them all into the District of Columbia and hung them on a common gallows and dug for them a common grave, this war might not have been. Traitors! Traitors! Traitors! Conspirators and abettors! Who are they? At every man who takes sides against the Union I point my finger as the finger of black

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history will point it at him and say, 'You are that traitor'."

There was tremor in both voice and hand of Judge Laury as he read the last lines. Ann Leuin stole a glance at his face. She had never before seen him so angry. Pushing her aside with an almost rough haste, he arose and white faced and with feverish fingers tore the paper to strips.

"Traitor! Traitor!" he exclaimed. "Who is the traitor? This day the last line I shall ever pen so black a traitor to his own country, his own people, his own honor, I shall address to him. I shall point at him as he has dared point at me and shout into his coward ears, '*You* are that traitor'!"

Judge Laury's finger was levelled at Ann Leuin and though she knew that for the moment he was not conscious she was there, she shuddered at the tenseness of his feeling, and a sharp pain clutched her heart as she thought of whom he spoke. Could it be that this white anger was spending itself against his lifetime friend?

"War! War! War! It has taken my son from me! It has broken the dearest bond of friendship I ever had! And my daughter—my only girl is promised to one of those who are making war!"

Ann Leuin's face paled under her father's tone. Then her paleness was followed by a flush of color as she said, "And is there any disgrace in this? Was it not by your consent and approval?"

"My consent for my only daughter to marry an on-hanger of the Black Republicans—a Union shrieker—a Lincolnite?"

"But he is not a Lincolnite—not a Yankee."

"The worse the deed; the more unnatural the crime of taking up arms against the South. But you are not married to him yet, and June is past, thank God!"

"But another June is on the way and I *will* be married to him," and the invisible threads in the cup of Ann Leuin's soft cheek dimple, tied in hard.

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"Let us not discuss it now. When the war is over if I return will be time enough."

"If you return? Are you going to war father? You?"

"I am driven to it—driven by traitors to the South like Honeycutt and Norcrosse—thrice driven to it with all my soul and energy for it is not the swift stroke of a sabre or the unerring rifle I must fight. It is the brains and cunning of men like Honeycutt who clothe their traitorous words in fine speeches and publish it broadcast in reputable newspapers. I too can fight—I can ride at the head of a fighting cavalry that will put an end to some, at least, of the unholy invaders of our homeland!"

There was fire and determination in his voice and the lines of his face were set hard.

"Father! Father!" Ann Leuin whispered with unsteady voice. "Make me a promise—just one promise. Gus promised me."

"What promise, my child?"

"That you—you will never kill Del Norcrosse."

"No. I cannot promise you. I only promise to do my duty. It is well to remember, however, that the guns of the South will not be turned on friends and only a coward or a traitor goes back on a sacred word of promise."

"I am not a traitor—I shall not be a traitor to my word," Ann Leuin exclaimed.

"I hope not."

"I have given my sacred promise to a man. Shall I betray it because he has made a mistake? Would my mother have deserted and forgotten you had you made the same mistake?"

"Your mother? She could never have loved a traitor. She would *hate* a traitor to the Southland!"

"Suppose the change in him came later, even now?"

Judge Laury hesitated a moment before saying, "Your mother is my wife. Wifely duty—love, if you will—might make a woman loyal to a traitor. But you are not the wife of Del Norcrosse."

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“ Not by the blessing of the clergyman or public bans. But by all the holy vows the heart can swear I am his. See—the ring—it is the emblem. It says always and forever, ‘ All is all and blood is blood,’ and by this token I am his and he is mine though he make a thousand mistakes.”

“ How can you, Ann Leuin Laury, love a traitor to our South—to our home and loved ones? ”

“ Because *love is stronger than hate.*”

A few days after his interview with Ann Leuin, Judge Laury entered the room where Mrs. Laury sat, wearing a heavy coat with a long cape, and a broad brimmed felt hat. Bowing he said, “ I salute! Do you recognize this soldier? ”

“ Tell me,” she gasped, “ what does this mean? It does not mean, it *cannot* mean that you too are going to leave me?”

“ Yes, dear.”

“ Going away to leave me here alone on this great plantation with danger on every side? Surely you do not mean it.”

Judge Laury put his arms around his wife and kissed her saying, “ Dear, brave little woman. Nobody but God knows how hard it is. All last night I lay awake thinking—thinking—thinking how I could do it. Yet a man must act a man’s part when duty urges with an insistence that will not be put down. Tell me now. Is my cavalry cloth beautiful in your eyes? ”

“ Beautiful? A soldier’s trappings beautiful? Never again to me. This seems little more than a shroud. Oh my husband, I too have lain awake thinking—thinking of fields far away where I see a soldier’s uniform covering the splendid body of our one son. And more than once in the midnight stillness I have heard him asking for water as he did when a child and I have started to call Mammy. Then I have remembered that he is far away. I have given the boy to the dangers of war. I cannot let you go! ”

“ Women who love would always keep the men they love from danger. But when honor is at stake—what then?”

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“Honor—what is it? I would fight for my children. I would fight for you my husband. I would fight for liberty. But for property? Ah, this is another thing. It is our property that is at stake—our slaves. I tell you it is not worth it. Nor are all the gold and silver and diamonds, nor all the stores and mines of wealth in all the world worth the sacrifice of human life that war brings—the homes desolate; children left fatherless to face a cruel world; women forced out as bread-finders; the flower of the coming generation killed or crippled and the seed of hatred sown between friends and brothers and races, a hatred ages cannot wipe out. I tell you there is no property consideration that is worth it. I had rather give up the plantation, free the negroes, turn the stock loose, throw my jewels in the street and work my fingers to the bone the rest of my days—rather this a hundred times than to be robbed of my son and my husband by war! Cruel monster WAR!”

“If property were the only issue your position might be well taken. It is the principle at stake we fight for. Under the surface of the slave question is the principle for which our fathers died. But you speak the lamentable truth when you say it breaks up friendships. Has it not made of my loved and life-long friend a lying, hypocritical Union shrieker? Has it not caused him to break the mystic tie by methods devilish? And what of our Ann Leuin? Is she the loving dutiful daughter she once was? Not an hour since the news came that the man she is betrothed to has joined the minions of Lincoln, has she been the same. How can she be, hugging to her heart the love of one who is traitor to his own people?”

“Don’t be too hard on poor little Ann Leuin. Her heart, already sore from disappointment at the delayed wedding, was almost broken by the letter you speak of, and you dear—let me speak plainly for the child’s sake, you are the one who has changed and the change is adding yet more to the burden of her sad young heart.”

“Let us not talk of it. War makes many changes in

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the hearts of womankind and many men there be who will not return to either love or hate. The problems of today concern generations yet unborn and their destiny will be determined by the outcome of this war. And while freedom is being shouted from the house-top, the sacred principle of the State's right to Democratic self-government is being threatened with disaster. It is no impulsive call of desire that moves me to enter this war. Rather it is the insistent urge of duty and I will shrink and cower before my own manhood unless I heed its call. Wife of mine—dear, true, brave little woman—shall I go or stay? ”

“ Duty! The soul that shrinks from duty dies. I had rather go my way in loneliness or even widowhood than that you should strangle the call to duty and remain with me, a coward. Go—go beloved husband and may the overshadowing presence of the Almighty watch between us while we are absent one from the other.”

The words were bravely spoken and without a tremor. But with their finish Mrs. Laury sank heavily within the arm that encircled her.

Calling Mammy to hurry with cold water, Judge Laury laid his wife on the couch.

CHAPTER V

SCOUTING

“ K.G.C.—Knights of the Golden Circle.”

In and out between thoughts shapen by news ever changing of war activities and their effect on the feverish social body, the letters and words twinkled like a star over-raced by ragged clouds.

Knights of the Golden Circle! Was there really such a secret organization, armed, drilling and ready to pour out an army at short notice—and this for the disruption of the Union? If so did the Government know it? And if there was anything to be known about it, how was he to discover it for he Del Norcrosse found himself intensely interested.

The urge of duty Judge Laury had spoken of as an irresistible compelling power, had come to Norcrosse as a clear call ringing a glad response. Yet before he entered the army he tried for a position in the Secret Service, hoping for an opportunity to get on the hidden trail of the K.G.C. No opportunity being offered, he took up his gun and knapsack and after some months of service with a fine company, made his way toward the Blue Ridge where a vast deal of scouting was necessary to counteract the activities of the guerillas with which the place was thickly infested.

Once after he had come to know the lay of the land pretty well, within hearing of the General, Norcrosse had said he would like to try his luck at scouting. Not many weeks later he was sent for by the General, a man of decisive action but few words.

“ My most reliable scout, Ranny Mead, was killed last night at the lower ford of Big Fork,” announced the general. “ General Blank, Rebel Commander, is at the Bedler Mansion on the Romney road. I must have word from Bedler Man-

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sion. Ranny Mead tried by boat—he was killed somewhere between here and the second mile stone on the river.”

“Romney Road—it’s in the heart of the enemy’s position, Sir.”

“It is.”

“Ranny Mead was killed there last night, Sir.”

“He was.”

“You want me to go on this deadly trip, Sir?”

“I do. I attack tomorrow at daybreak. General Blank knows it or expects it and will mass either on the centre or left wing. I must know which. I am not unaware of the danger you incur. It is a life and death case—you understand this.”

“I understand Sir, a life and death case—life—death!”

Norcrosse stood silent a second.

“You hesitate.”

“I am thinking, Sir, not hesitating. There is a woman—a girl—I love her.”

“A weakness peculiar to most men.”

“A strength sometimes, Sir.”

“As you will, but do your thinking where your head is safe.”

“I go, Sir.”

“Very good. Two miles from here, midway to the enemy’s outposts and six paces beyond the second mile stone are two rockets propped inside a hollow stump. Ranny Mead placed them there yesterday. You are to slip to Blank’s headquarters tonight, learn what I must know and hurry back to the hollow stump. If he masses on the centre, let off one rocket; if on the left, let off both. A dangerous task—and must be done at once.”

As if in a self-luminated moving mist, Ann Leuin passed; the golden curls, the sea-blue eyes, the smile, the dimple, the soft white hands. They waved at him—and were gone.

“I am ready Sir,” Norcrosse said in a firm clear voice.

“Last night the river seemed safer. Ranny Mead did not find it so. Tonight the same gang may be on the same

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watch. Go by the road. You will ride my own horse. If you need to speak to him he knows the name of Greyhound. It is a life and death ride for the horse and rider—for an army—a nation. Go and good luck.”

“ Thank you, Sir.”

It was a scrubby mountainous country and shadowy. Norcrosse rode slowly at first getting acquainted with a steed quivering for speed, and slipping into that state of mind which makes a man a creature of the dark and like a creature of the dark, unafraid. It was a cool, misty, uncertain night with ragged clouds moving overhead like snatches of tattered veils and a mysterious breeze that seemed heavy with some uncanny secret. The country was wild and desolate. Mountains and ravines alternated with now and then a brush grown plateau. The tang of frost in the air and the pull of the horse for a run stirred the blood into a tingle of excitement and after giving the horse the rein, Norcrosse seemed to fly rather than ride down the successive hillsides, little caution being necessary for some miles. The rapid pace was kept up until the outlying edge of one of the broomy plateaus was reached. Here he found the block of granite which he recognized as the second mile stone. Dismounting he moved to the hollow stump, found the rockets, examined them carefully, replaced them and was again away.

Caution was now necessary. He rode slowly, kept his horse on the grass, and under the shadows of the wayside growth. Once he stopped, tore his handkerchief in strips and made fast to either heel the rowels of his spurs which had a tinkle of their own. With eyes and ears strained he watched for some familiar landmark, the glimmer of a camp fire or the dim outlines of a tent-top or the snort of a steed, the signal of a picket—or any sound to give warning. But there was not a sight—not a sound. The dark grey silence was like that of the tomb. The mountains stood about mantled with sombre pines and hooded with mist, repellent in their awful solitude. The moon was driving

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wearily through the weird and ragged sky, its face pale and ghostly as if it might be the mystery hinted by the midnight breeze. A sense of apprehension came to Norcrosse, yet the knowledge of his danger and the issues at stake kept his blood running warm.

He had come to the termination of the last plateau from which the dim road led down a ravine which seemed shrouded in midnight darkness by the towering mountains. The way was now extremely rough and rocky and though he travelled slowly and with care, the hoofs of his horse striking the rock sounded like cannon of destruction. He had reached the bottom of the descent where there was again grass when he was suddenly confronted by several horsemen who appeared so suddenly they seemed to have arisen from the ground.

"Why do you return so slowly?" one of the horsemen said impatiently. "What have you seen—did you meet Colonel Craig?"

In the first moment Norcrosse thought himself lost. But his mind worked quickly and with automatic skill. Evidently he had been sent for—sent as a spy no doubt—to meet Colonel Craig. He would act the part of the Colonel's orderly.

"Colonel Craig met your messenger," he said boldly. "He had seen nothing and advised him to scout down the edge of the creek for half a mile. But he dispatched me, his orderly, to say the enemy appears to be retreating in heavy masses. I am also to convey this intelligence to General Blank."

The horsemen listened seemingly without suspicion.

"Did the Colonel think the movement a real retreat or only a feint?" asked the leader.

"He was uncertain, but bade me say he would ascertain. And in an hour or two, if you should see one rocket up to the North there, you will know the Yankees are retreating. If you see two, they will be stationary with likelihood of remaining another day."

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“ Good! Good! ” said the horseman. “ Do you know the way to the General’s headquarters? ”

“ I think I can find it,” Norcrosse answered, “although I am not familiar with this side of the mountain.”

“ It’s a mile this side of the Bedler Mansion. You will find some pickets at the head of the road. You must there leave your horse and climb the steep when you will see a farm house. Fifteen minutes walk toward it will bring you to the General’s tent. I will go with you to the top of the road.”

Before Norcrosse had time to speak, the trooper set off at a gallop which he was glad to follow. As he rode he thought of the countersign which had not been asked, owing to the mistake of the horsemen. But the next picket was not likely to let him pass. Luckily the horseman was ahead. Norcrosse kept close behind hoping to catch the password. But it was so quickly said all he heard was “ Tally.” He was almost up to the picket. “ Tally—tally—tally what? Tallyho? ” The question danced across his brain. “No, that’s English. Tallyrand? That’s French.” Then the word came just as he passed and yelling “Tallahassee” he dashed by the guns of the pickets in safety.

Without further excitement he found the place indicated by his guide. It was up the side of a mountain so high that he looked down on the mist gathering like a dim sea over the valley. For some distance he rode. Then securing his horse he took the remaining ascent by foot. Extraordinary caution was now necessary, and as he neared the farm house he crept on all fours. Not a hundred yards away the tent of the General, lighted within, stood out clearly. A solitary guard paced around it.

Norcrosse stopped, scarce daring to breathe. Then he straightened up and approached the guard.

“ Who goes there? ”

“ A friend.”

“ Advance and give the countersign.”

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Advancing as near as he thought safe he whispered "Tallahassee!"

"It's a damn lie!" said the sentry raising his gun to his shoulder. "That answers the pickets, but not me," and the stillness was broken by the sharp click of the rising musket hammer.

A second time that night Norcrosse felt his time had come to meet death face to face. Unless the cap failed, all was over. Strangely enough it did and when he heard the hammer drop with a dull and harmless thud, he sprang forward with the quick and stealthy motion of a panther and threw himself upon the sentry, grappling, clutching his windpipe and forcing him to his knees. The gun slid to the ground. A bowie knife shown in the guard's belt which Norcrosse jerked out with one hand while with the other he held his prey in a death grip. The struggle was fierce but silent. Realizing his peril, Norcrosse worked like a demon. The knife did the work. Hesitating but a moment Norcrosse drove it to its hilt between the sentry's ribs. Dying, the soldier relaxed his hold. For a few moments Norcrosse lay quiet, his eyes looking alternately at the silent figure beside him and the tent from which the low murmur of voices came.

When sure the sentry was dead he knelt beside him and with a face whiter than that which he looked upon he thought fast. The slouch hat had fallen off in the death grapple and the pale face of the dead man was upturned to the moonlight—a fine, clean, handsome face.

"Was it a fair fight?" The question seemed to stab Norcrosse like a knife. Then the sense of his peril and the grave duty stifled this remorse and watching in every direction, and working quickly, he removed the dead sentry's overcoat and put it on, threw his cap away and donned the soft felt hat. He then dragged the handsome young body behind an outhouse of the farm. Returning he took up the gun and began to saunter up and down in watchful

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sentry fashion drawing nearer and nearer the tent at every turn.

The voices sounded more distinctly until he could almost catch the words. He moved closer. He took a minute survey of the premises, crept to the tent, crouched down in the bottom of the trench and with his ear against the canvas listened. Once he took a peep under the bottom. Six Confederate officers sat around a table upon which a map was spread. Until the conference was near an end he listened before taking up his sentry march. The officers came outside the tent, looked about, went away two of them passing close to him. For a time the light glimmered in the tent. Then it was extinguished and all was dark and still except the voice of a fellow sentry now and then and the rattle of a halter in the horse manger near by.

Until two o'clock he did sentry duty. Then cautiously as he had made the ascent, he went down to his horse and started the mountain descent. "Tallahassee" let him through the first picket again but when he reached the horsemen in the ravine he was greeted with the Rebel yell and the leader shouted, "Halt or you're a dead man! He's a Yank! Cut him down—Spy!"

With sabre in one hand and revolver in the other Norcrosse made a dash down the gully. The next moment he was the centre of a shooting, stabbing, slashing, swearing mob. He felt something graze his cheek like hot iron. Again something whistled past his ear. Then there was a sabre blow which cut away the brim of his hat and opened a long deep cut across his forehead, for he felt the warm blood running.

"Greyhound! Greyhound—run boy—fly!" and with a wild leap Norcrosse burst away from them up the banks of the ravine.

He could hear the alarm being spread back over the mountain by calls and drums. Then the clatter of pursuing steeds reached his ears.

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“ On Greyhound! On—on! ” he urged. It’s time to send the rockets.”

Like a whirlwind he rushed on to the hollow stump. For a moment excitement and loss of blood so weakened Norcrosse that he reeled. Then he steadied himself and sent up the rockets—one—two—his heart leaping with exultation as the rushing rockets followed each other into the dark heavens and there broke the gloom with showers of glittering fire.

In the saddle again and off—but not soon enough. With yells that made the night hideous those he had escaped were after him. Greyhound sped. Yet they were gaining and the number seemed to have increased to a pack. He lifted his eyes and scanned the skyline sharply. Not far ahead a tree with low hanging branches stood near the roadside and beyond this, other trees cast a shade for some distance. His plan was quickly made. He pulled his feet from the stirrup and as the horse dashed under the tree Norcrosse swung himself into it, meantime urging his steed on with a sharp call. A moment later the pack rushed under the tree and after the frightened and fleeing horse.

The next forenoon serried columns of men might have been seen swinging irresistibly down the mountain toward the opposite slope; flying field pieces were dashing off into position; long lines of cavalry were haunting the gullies, and the blare of bugles rose above the roar of artillery with a wild, victorious peal. The two rockets had been answered and the Union army was bearing down upon the enemy, but Del Norcrosse was not there to see it.

CHAPTER VI

THE CALL

It was night time on the plantation.

While silence brooded over the big house which in the light of a radiant moon stood like a phantom of past animated days, a profane sound caught the ear of the ever-watchful Mammy and without bothering Mrs. Laury or Ann Leuin who were writing letters, she set forth to investigate.

The noise came from a cabin on the way to the quarters. At an opening on its shadowy side which served for a window, Mammy looked in. It was a typical ante-bellum abode with a floor of puncheon and, a rude hewn hearth stone with a three legged black iron bake-oven in the ashes. One pine knot burned on the hearth and another in an open jar on the table. The cabin was filled with tattered, bare-foot negroes of both sexes who were dancing to the monotonous picking of an old banjo and the rattling of a pair of bones. To her displeasure Mammy saw that Mosey had charge of the torch on the table which, at times, he jerked out, and waved, jumping and shouting.

Mosey was the first to catch sight of Mammy. Sticking the torch in the jar and assuming a respectful attitude he said, "Mammy hab came."

The dancing stopped and the slaves turned toward the door where Mammy stood dark, silent, stern. After a moment of impressive and uncomfortable silence she said, "You am correc', Mammy hab came. What fer all you niggers got dis racket an' row goin' on dis time night? An' you," turning to Mosey, "What you doin' here? Didn't I hea' Missy sendin' you to bed at sundown kaze you let de hoss chaw de rose bush down? When I gits done wid you you sho will know how to min' yo' Missus."

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“ I’s e done minded my Missus. I’s e done went to bed an’ I’s e done riz. I wuz sleepin’ lak a houn’ when I heered dese niggers hollerin’, an’ I wuz dat sho, it wuz de roost’rs crowin’ I riz. An’ I runned, but, fo’ Gawd I wuz runnin’ de wrong way an’ nebber knowed hit twell I done got hea’. An’ den dese here niggers dey put me to watchin’ de light an’ I’s e been skeered to lebe kaze day’s e gwine kill me.”

“ You o’nery li’l’ liar! Ef yo’ laigs wuzn’t warped I’d beat some troof into yo’ black hide.”

“ My hide am done stuff wid troof. I habben’t nebber tol’ a lie in my whole life, so he’p me Gawd.”

“ Shet up yo’ blab or I’s e gwine whip you twell yo’ tongue hang out.”

Then turning to the others she said, “ While you no-count niggers am down here jollifyin’, Missy at de big house cryin’ kaze Mars Jedge done been shot by de Yanks.”

This announcement produced an immediate effect in groans and wails. Mammy raised her hand.

“ Dry up yo’ moufs. De Yanks didn’t kill Mars Jedge. De shots went in his a’m. What you niggers wants to do is git prayin’ fer Gawd A’mi’ty to hol’ off de Yanks. Mars Jedge hab a hoss—dar am no hoss lak hit, nor no white man what can ride a hoss an’ shoot lak our Mars Jedge. But de Yanks hab hosses what runs obber all such hosses as you niggers ebber seed. Dey eyes am fire; dey snorts smoke, outen dey noses; dey feet am lak knives. Dey rushes an’ tromps an’ runs so fas’ de tail an’ de ha’r about de head stan’ on end an’ whistle in de win’—dey runs so fas’. An’ dey am on de track comin’ dis way an’ ol’ Mars Linkum he whoppin dem on wid worse whips dan ebber sizzed roun’ a whippin’ post. You niggers git busy axin Gawd not to let dem hosses come dis way. Git prayin’, niggers, prayin’.”

For a moment Mammy stood with uplifted hands. Then she turned away. A negro began to sing. One by one the others joined, the guttural tones rising and falling in rhythmic cadence, sometimes tremulous, sometimes exultant and sometimes dying away to be caught up on its outgoing and

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again rolled into a surge of melody. At times the effort was a half savage incantation. Again it softened into the melancholy sweetness that suggests an unseen world. The words which were improvised from Mammy's description of battle horses, served as the vehicle and were repeated in a monotonous arrangement.

The flickering pine torches cast a fantastic light over the scene and the swaying bodies made grotesque shadows that hovered on the walls and moved in unison with the weird music.

Standing by the table Mosey, unconsciously imitated the swaying motion, his head dropping dangerously near the torch in the jar until at last his wool touched the flame. Then a fearful shriek rose above the incantation and put a stop to it.

"I'se ketched! I'se afire! My head am bu'nin off! Put me out! Ow—o—o Gawd A'mi'ty!" and emitting fearful shrieks he dashed into the middle of the room his wool blazing on top of his head. A scene of wild excitement followed during which Mosey was caught, and while he screamed and kicked, water by the gourdful was emptied on his head from a bucket.

"I'se bu'nin' up! My haid am fryin' off! Hit am cookin'!" this was his lamentation.

"You isn't bu'nin' no mo'. Youse done been put out an' dey'se done run fer Missy. She's comin'."

When Mrs. Laury arrived followed by Mammy with bandages and ointment, it did not take her long to quiet the frightened Mosey who was painfully but not seriously burned, thanks to the deluge of water. But he pled so piteously for her to stay with him lest he die, that Mrs. Laury decided to stay, though Mammy protested saying she did not want her mistress to sleep in a nigger cabin.

"I could not sleep anyway, Mammy," she said. "Besides Mosey must be kept quiet. Some of our slaves are in a state of mind bordering on panic already because of horrible war stories and we do not want an uprising."

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"All right den," Mammy said turning to the negroes. "You niggers git out an fin' you som'er else to sleep while yo' Missus stay to nuss a o'nery nigger," and Mammy smoothed the bed so that her mistress might lie down.

Mrs. Laury stepped to the open window and stood looking into the placid night. As she stood the silence was broken by the joyful night song of a mocking bird near by.

"How beautiful!" Mrs. Laury exclaimed. "It always seems when I hear it in the night that it comes from something more than a bird."

"Hit do, Li'l' Missy," Mammy answered. "De mos' lublies' ob all de sperits am in de birds what sings. You know, Missy, ebry place an' ebry t'ing am full ob sperits—some good, some bad. Eben de green t'ings hab sperits."

"Listen, Mammy, it is singing again but farther away. I think it is on the hillside—perhaps swinging in a vine over the little graves."

"Yessum, Missy. Is you t'inkin' ob Mars Gus?"

"Not just this minute. I was thinking of the children lying under the mounds and of my mother—and wondering if in that Heaven to which they have gone, we will know each other. I hope so, yet the leaf that falls to the ground is never again a part of the tree, not as a leaf. So the flower that once blooms forever dies. Will it be the same with us?"

"Sho no, Missy, kaze pussons got somet'ing in 'em what am not in de flow'r."

"I know Mammy, they tell us the breath of God is in every living thing from the palest blossom to the strongest man. What my heart yearns to know is, whether our individual personality will exist beyond the grave—whether we shall be ourselves there and *know* ourselves to be the same we have been here?"

"Am you axin yo' Mammy 'bout dis?"

"Do you know Mammy?"

"I sho does. I know dat we'se gwine be de same, an' den again we isn't, bofe."

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Mrs. Laury smiled as she said, "Can you explain it, Mammy?"

"No'm, I ain't 'splain nothin'. But what I knows I knows. Hit am lak dis. Long 'go—so long I done los' count of de yea's—a li'l' nigger played 'roun' de big house on yo' gran'pappy's place back in ol' Ca'liny. Once she got whipped kaze her missus say she done stole a pie. She done forgit mos' all what happen' way off dem times, but she habben't nebber fergit dem lashes on de back nor de hu'tin' ob de hea't kaze she nebber toted off de pie. I is dat li'l' nigger, Missy—an' yet I isn't no li'l' nigger. Den dey wuz a gal what hab a chile. Hit wuz a lakly li'l' chile an' she lobe hit. But ol' Missus hab a white gal what wuz marryin' off to Alabam' an' de white gal hab a white chile what lub de black chile. So dey took de black chile f'om de gal what was hits mammy an' sen' hit off to Alabam'. An' de gal she kick an' scream an' say she won't nebber eat no mo' twell Ol' Missus say she gwine sell 'er out to New 'Leans. I is dat gal Li'l' Missy—an' yit I isn't no young gal kaze I'se been changin'. I done fergit de color ob de hosses dat rode de chile away; I'se done fergit de pussons an' de places ob dem times. But de deep cut ob sorrow—lak when chillum am took f'om dey mammies, an' de deep joys, lak when dey bring de chile back kaze hit wuz pinin' away, dese las'; an' hit am dese scars what mak' me know I is de same what lived an' yet what hab passed on. An' kaze I knows what hab a'ready been, so I knows what gwine happen when dar am mo' changin' yet. I doan 'spec' Missy, I'se gwine 'member de flowers on de dishes in dis here place, nor de names ob de dawgs when I gits fu'ther on. Mebby I'se gwine fergit de way you wea's yo ha'r, but Missy, yo ol' black Mammy sho is gwine know you over dar an' 'member you kaze I'se loved you all de yea's, an' hit am lovin' dat mak' de scars of mis'ry an' de scars ob joy what we cain't nebber fergit. So we gwine be de same, an' yet, count ob changin', we'se gwine be not de same. No, Missy, I can't 'splain, but I knows what I knows."

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“ Love and memory! Mammy your homely logic is more comforting than all the world’s philosophy and I believe you are right.

Mrs. Laury turned her face again to the shadowy moonlit world. The stillness was broken by a question from Mammy.

“ Is you thinkin’ ob Mars Gus? ”

“ You asked me that a moment ago. Why do you ask again? ”

“ Hit seem lak you is.”

“ No, I was just thinking how wonderfully white and clear the moonlight is.”

“ Yes, Li’l’ Missy. Dis am de kin’ ob nights de shadder angels walk. Dey doan mak’ no fuss an’ you nebber hea’ ’em ’ceptin’ when you hea’s de mo’ unin’ dove callin’ in de moonlight. Dat am de voices ob de shadder angels, de ones what calls us on an ’tends us ’trough de valley of de shadder in de Good Book.”

“ I never heard a turtle dove crying at night.”

“ You is lucky, Missy. I nebber tol’ you but befo’ de chillun went to de hillside, I heered de shadder angels callin’ dem—de mou’nin’ dove callin’, callin’—in de moonlight. Fur, fur off de dove wuz callin’—fur acrost de field. Hit wuz de shadder angels comin’. But you am tired, Missy. I’ll set an’ watch while you res’.” and Mammy spread her large clean apron across the bed.

Mrs. Laury lay down and the cabin was quiet a moment when Mammy said in a whisper, “ Is you t’inkin’ ob Mars Gus? ”

Mrs. Laury raised herself and said impatiently, “ Mammy, this is three times you have asked me this question. Do you think I have forgotten my boy? ”

“ Not dat, Missy. I means is you t’inkin’ ob him so hard pears lak you cain’t git yo’ bref? T’inkin’ so hard he seem right close up. Mars Gus got dat close to me an’ ob a sudden set me t’inkin’ ob a day when de chillun wuz li’l’. I wuz tellin’ dem de story ob de pale hoss what you read outen de

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Good Book. Mars Gus git plum skeered. He hid his face agin me an' cried, " Mammy doan let dat ol' pale hoss git me', he said, an' he helt so tight lak he couldn't nebber tu'n loose. An' jest now he come close again, so close, I can feel him lak dat day."

" It is your imagination, Mammy. You will be thinking you hear a wood dove next and they never cry at night. Better take a nap."

Mrs. Laury dropped back on the bed. Mammy drew her chair to the window and seemed listening but not to the mocking bird. Once she called softly to her mistress but there was no answer. The song of the mocking bird ceased. The quiet of the night seemed strange and brooding when on the stillness was distinctly heard the sobbing call of the wood dove trembling out on the turning of the night like the plaint of a soul in trouble. With a start Mammy sprang up crying, " Hit am de call! Hit am de call! De shadder angels am a walkin' in de moonlight. Dey's comed fer—fer O, Mars Gus, I feel you hol'in' to yo' ol' black Mammy. Po' chile you hol' so tight—so tight you'se hol'in to me darlin' chile! But yo' ol' black Mammy cain't do nothin' kaze dat pale hoss am comin' an' you'se gwine away. O Mars Gus—is you gwine? Am hit *you* what dey am callin' for? " and Mammy dropped into the chair and gave way to uncontrollable grief.

" Mammy! Mammy! " cried Mrs. Laury, springing up, " what is the matter? "

" I'se had a dream, I 'spec' I'se skeered. I 'lowed I seed somethin'! "

" You must not have such dreams, Mammy. They make you suffer and they quite unnerve me. "Go into the fresh air and walk off this troubled dream."

"Yessum, Missy."

CHAPTER VII

ANN LEUIN'S PATIENT

THE moon dimmed into the silver grey sky which in the east was turning pink. The mellow sound of a horn was heard as the sun cast its first gold light over the cotton fields. At the big house a bell rang and snatches of plantation melody were heard, and when Mrs. Laury, who had dropped into a sound sleep the latter part of the night, suddenly awoke, she found morning well begun.

Mrs. Laury had been at the big house a few minutes when Ann Leuin returned from an early morning ride, one of the few pleasures of her busy war-time days. Beside her was a Blue-coat.

"I found the poor little fellow asleep in the woods beyond the Swan's Neck," she explained to her mother. "He was frightened half to death when he waked to find me there, but he couldn't run because he has a thorn in his foot and a fever beside. He was a drummer boy at Shiloh, was one of the two thousand prisoners taken there, was carried to Corinth, then to a camp farther south, made his escape, has been living on berries and grass no telling how long. When I made him know we people in the South don't eat Blue-coats alive, he finally agreed to let me bring him home.

Ann Leuin had never made so important a discovery. She had not seen a real live Yankee before. She intended to nurse this one and get acquainted with the strange species, and this was how it happened that she learned to make arrowroot gruel and a dozen other kinds of sick room diet and came to discover the soothing powers of a woman's soft finger-touch on a fevered brow.

One day when Ann Leuin had watched her frail little patient go to sleep she said to Mosey, "I am going out for

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a time. The little Yankee must sleep all he can so as to grow strong and well. We want him to remember that we people in the South know how to be kind to Yankees if they do hate us. See to it that the flies do not annoy him. Do you hear, Mosey? "

"Yessum, Miss Ann Loon, I hea's. I habben't nebber quit fannin' one minute."

Ann Leuin had not been long gone when the Union boy awoke and after watching Mosey a few moments said, "You don't seem to mind being a slave. Don't you want to be free? "

Rolling his white eyes in astonishment Mosey said, "Free? What fer? "

"To be your own boss—to do as you please."

A broad grin spread over the black face as he answered, "I does dat now. Gawd A'mi'ty done ruint my laigs so Missus doan let nobody beat me."

"But God never intended you to be a slave."

"I 'spec' he done mak' me lak he want me kaze he done baked me into a nigger."

"Baked you? " and there was amazement in the question.

"Yes suh. White pussons am jest half baked. Dey am no count in de cotton-patch. Niggers am baked plum done. De sun can't faze 'em."

"I never heard of such a thing."

"Dat's kaze you habben't got no 'ligion. No Yank got 'ligion."

"Have you got religion? "

"Sho. Dey hain't no nigger on dis plantation widout 'ligion. Missus doan 'low hit. Down at de qua'ters dey shouts and yells an' cuts up when dey gits theirn. We'uns what live at de big house has to get ourn lak Missus. She larned Mammy hern, an' Mammy she learns us ourn."

"What does Mammy teach you? "

"'Bout de whale what et up Moses—de gen'l'man I'se named atter; 'bout de pale hoss what comes a-ridin' an'

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a-ridin' to git us atter while: that Gawd A'mi'ty mak us outen dus' what he wets up an' rolls into a mud man. Den he bake de mud man. Den he blow bref at 'im an' say ' Git up nigger, an' watch out er de debbil gwine git you sho, kaze he am on de track ob dem what steals an' tells lies an' cusses'."

"Cusses? "

" Yanks doan know nothin', do dey? Cussin' an sayin' 'Gawddam' an' ol' Peter doan open dem pea'ly gates fer no sich."

" Do you expect to get to heaven? "

" I sho is on de way. Hit am de fines' place! 'Simmons am allus hangin' on de 'simmon trees widout no pucker in 'em; an' muskerdines is sweet as honey an' possums stays fat all de yea' 'roun', an' de melon vines doan nebber dry up. I habben't nebber tol' no lies nor cussed an' I sho isn't gwine freeze in hell."

" Freeze? The bad place is hot—not cold."

" Dat am de Yank's bad place. Nobody cain't scare no nigger 'bout no *hot* hell. Mammy done tried. She say in nigger hell de debbil rolls 'em in de snow, an' mak' 'em run plum naked in de freezin' win' and beats 'em wid icicles. I sho isn't gwine dar. But you better go to sleep lak Miss Ann Loon said."

" What will you do if I sleep? "

" Fan you lak Miss Ann Loon done tol' me to."

" All right," and the Union boy turned his head on the pillow and closed his eyes.

Mosey fanned for a moment. Then he put the fan on the bed and went to the table to inspect the contents of a work-basket. There was a straw bonnet on the top with some loose trimming from which Mrs. Laury intended to fashion a new bonnet. Mosey stuck a feather in the straw and put the bonnet on his head nodding and twisting greatly to his own amusement. Next he took something white from the basket. Inspection showed it to be a garment generally kept concealed under feminine skirts. He glanced at the

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sick boy, whose eyes were safely closed. He peeped into the hallway. He then stepped behind the door and a moment later emerged a most ludicrous spectacle wearing the bifurcated garment, the band of which reached to his arm-pits. Keeping out of range of the doorway he amused himself walking in imitation first of the graceful walk of Miss Ann Leuin and then projecting his chest, in imitation of Mammy when she was angry.

As he paraded and twisted, laughter was heard from the bed. Inspired by this happy recognition of his imitative art Mosey forgot his dignity and gave as good a breakdown as his crooked legs allowed until he heard someone coming when he dodged behind the couch and dropped out of sight.

In an incredibly short time he shed his grotesque finery and was back at the bed side when Ann Leuin entered.

"Has Mosey been good to you?" she asked the Union boy.

"The best in the world," and the sick boy laughed so heartily Ann Leuin was sure he was feeling better and well enough for a talk which she wanted to have with him before he went away.

"You will be going away soon. I want you to remember us kindly. We have tried to treat you as we would want our dear Gus treated if he were in your place."

"Good? You have treated me like a brother. I didn't know a Rebel could be so kind to a Blue-coat. I think you're not a Rebel. You are an angel that just thinks you're something else."

Ann Leuin laughed, much pleased, and said, "You haven't had your blue clothes on since you came here. You will never have them on again. They were torn and bloody and—BLUE, and we burned them. You could not get out of Mississippi in blue clothes. You will leave as a Southern boy and I hope you will never put a blue coat on again. How can you hate the South?"

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“ It is not because we hate the South we fight, but because we love the Union. Surely one so beautiful as you knows how to love.”

“ Yes—yes—I know how to love—know how well enough to love a man who wears blue. Isn’t that a lot? ”

“ You—love a Northern man? ”

“ He’s not a Northerner. He’s of the South.”

“ He must be a brave fellow—a fine fellow.”

“ He is—brave—fine—splendid—everything except—”

Ann Leuin stopped without finishing the sentence.

“ You will soon be back in the North—in Ohio, not far from Virginia where his home is. You want to do something for me. Let me put a card in the little Bible you carry—a small card in an envelope addressed to him. I don’t know where he is but you may run across him. If you should it would make him very happy to get the card. Will you do this for a Virginia man who wears blue like yours? ”

The boy’s face shone as he said, “ For him I would not refuse. But for you—for you—I would do anything. You are the loveliest lady I have ever seen—I shall remember you as an angel, never as a Rebel.”

So Ann Leuin wrote the A.L.L. X code on a card, and put it in a small envelope which she addressed to Del Norcrosse.

As she put it in the little Bible she said, “ I am putting it in by a verse which says, ‘ Bread cast upon the waters shall return after many days.’ What if this should find him? ”

CHAPTER VIII

HOUND'S TEETH

ANN LEVIN missed the Fredericksburg *Herald*, not a copy of which had been mailed to the Laury home after Honeycutt received the bitter letter from the Judge severing the long-time and tender ties of friendship, and asking as a special favor that not another copy of the poison and traitorous *Herald* be sent his way.

After the house party just before the war, Ann Levin had felt a special interest in Uncle Honey's paper. She did not read it much, but she looked over it, sometimes stroked it with tender fingers, and then stacked it away—for no reason other than the impulse of preserving it from cruelty of flames or other desecration. But there were plenty of other papers, Charleston, Mobile, Montgomery, Richmond, Atlanta, New Orleans and Memphis papers kept coming and she and her mother looked them over for war news.

It was in the Memphis *Appeal* she read an advertisement that struck her at the time, the substance of which was brought forcibly to her mind at a later time. The advertisement read: "Bloodhounds Wanted—We the undersigned, will pay five dollars per pair for fifty pair of well-bred hounds and fifty dollars for one pair of thorough-bred blood hounds that will take the track of a man. The purpose for which these dogs are wanted is to chase the infernal, cowardly Lincoln bushwhackers of East Tennessee and Kentucky to their haunts and capture them. The said hounds must be delivered at Captain Hammer's livery stable by the 10th of December next, when a mustering officer will be present to muster and inspect them."

Del Norcrosse was somewhere in East Tennessee when he last wrote. Would these hounds track him? Blood-

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hounds! Slaves were tracked by them—slaves had been torn up by them. But white people—even Yankee people—
—Was this warfare?

Del Norcrosse, though he did not know it as he breathed low while he yet sat in the tree where he had sprung from his flying horse, was to know more of hounds and their teeth before morning. Mopping the blood from his eyes, he looked out into the darkness scarce daring to breathe until the last echo of the horsemen's clatter had been swallowed by the night. Then, with every instinct of preservation alert he slid down the tree. Again he stopped, looked and listened. The spirit of the night seemed to breathe uneasily and the wind to stir unearthly sighings as of earth-bound souls imprisoned in some forgotten graveyard.

The breaking of a twig under his foot with his first step sent an alarm through him that brought perspiration oozing from every pore of his skin—clammy like. Not to know where he was! Not to know where his enemy might be! Somewhere hereabouts the brave and loyal Ranny Mead had been killed the night before. Perhaps his body was lying in the way he should take. Or it might be hanging on the outreaching limb of some tree over his head! Suppose he should walk into it—be touched in the face by the cold toes swinging ever so lightly in the mystery breeze? Somewhere down along the river bank the dead man's boat was hidden. If he could get across the river he believed he might make his way to the Northern lines some miles beyond.

In the woods and scrubs all was dark. Not the faintest light was discernible and he heard no human sound. Once a bird started from a bush and dashed against his face leaving the frightened effect of a bullet sting. Once a rabbit jumped close beside him after which he dropped on all fours and lay close to the earth until he was sure. How far he had gone he did not know nor the time he had travelled, when in the grey dimness of a moon now overcast with clouds he saw an opening and the dull glow of

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water. He had reached the river—the treacherous stream that had concealed along its overgrown banks those of the enemy who had put Ranny Mead out of the way. By the side of a log he paused to listen and if possible to formulate some story should he be captured. From his pockets he took what few papers he carried and stuck them under the log with the exception of a small white card on which Ann Leuin had written their code for his talisman. His name was written on the envelope with the word “Vicksburg.”

He found himself on a bank above the river. Unacquainted with its contours he made his way slowly down stream searching for a place where he could get to the water. Ranny Mead’s boat was somewhere. If by good luck he could find it, it would help him. Feeling his way and straining his eyes he at last found a long slope like a rough wagon-way leading to a ford, perhaps. While he stood at the water’s edge in the stillness unbroken by the sound of a falling leaf, the long, low, full-chested baying of a hound reached his ears. It was far away—but a hound.

Moving with that safe rapidity that comes in moments of great danger, he measured the water. It was shallow and with pebbly bottom. Removing his boots he slung them over his shoulder and started up stream, moving cautiously into deeper water until he was wading above his knees.

The deep throated and savage baying was coming closer. The hound was on his track and now he could hear the savage yell of the Rebels and knew it was guerillas—blood-thirsty and infamous. He had reached a large log which jutted into the water which he must go around. In trying to do so he lost footing and would have gone into a hole had he not thrown his arms around the log. Climbing over it he left his boots and the Confederate cape and started again when something touched his breast which to his great joy he found was a boat—Ranny Mead’s boat no doubt.

The baying of the hound was closer—quite close, but he knew the beast was at fault—he had lost the trail. If

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he could get a good start in the boat perhaps in the darkness he might yet escape. He loosened the boat, working with nervous fingers in the dark. He took the paddle. To gain the open it was necessary for him to clear the big log. The cracking of twigs and crushing of brush and grasses just above told him the hound was at hand. With a menacing growl the savage brute ran down the log and crouched for a spring. Lifting the paddle Norcrosse gave one sweeping blow aimed to knock the dog off the log. Instead the stroke caused the boat to careen toward the hound, which jumped at it and seized the gunwale with his teeth. Norcrosse pulled his pistol. It was now or never. Something seemed to hold his hand. A pistol shot would bring the guerillas who, if he dispatched the beast in silence might yet lose his trail. Meantime the weight of the beast's body pulled the craft over and the water was rushing in. Norcrosse threw his revolver into the boat and drew his knife. The sound of voices coming over the hill moved him to quick action. He thrust at the dog's throat but not with sufficient force. The beast took a spring and in someway fastened its jaws around the heel of Norcrosse. Then came the death struggle told in the mellow darkness by the splashing of water, growls and curses. The man made another thrust at the throat of his adversary, this time with effect. The jaws fell apart. The beast dropped off.

The guerillas were on the bank and shouting. He called back asking aid for a Rebel in dire distress. The light of torches threw a sickly glare over the still more sickly water. With the blood yet dripping over his eyes and his heel burning like fire, he swam out and joined the men who held their guns over him.

"Who are you?"

"A Confederate messenger."

"Where bound?"

"To Richmond."

"What are you doing here, you damn liar?"

"Trying to get to the Rebel lines. I was nearly there

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on my way when I was attacked by Yankee horsemen who all but killed me, took my gun and all my papers but one which I pinned on the inside of my shirt. Everything else is gone. In return I got kicked and cursed and slashed and have been seeing blood ever since.

“ How did you get away—come now? ”

Satisfied that these men were not the same as those he had escaped earlier in the night he said, “ As my horse ran under a tree I sprang into the branches. While they pursued the fleeting horse I came to the river. My God, boys, its hard enough to get through being captured and robbed and killed and all but hanged by the damn Yankees, without being charged with being one? ”

“ Let's see.”

Torches were held to his face which was ghastly white, with fresh blood dripping from a sabre slash across the forehead. Then he lifted his heel and in the flickering light they saw a foot mangled and torn from which a red stream pumped.

The examination was disturbed by the appearance of two Confederate officers who seemed to be known of the men as no signs were given.

“ What have you here? ” one of the officers asked.

“ A prisoner—bleeding. Hounds tracked him into the river. He swears he is a messenger on his way to Richmond from the South with an important message.”

“ More likely he's a damn Yankee liar. If he is, string him up and don't waste good time.”

“ He says he has a message.”

“ Let's see it, out with it.”

With shaking hands, for he was growing weak from loss of blood, Norcrosse opened his shirt and took out the small white envelope.

It was held in the centre of a group of torches and carefully examined, especially the address.

“ Is your name Del Norcrosse? ”

“ It is the name I go by, Sir.”

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“ I think he’s a damn clever spy,” said one of the officers. “ Better let him stretch hemp.”

“ Stretch hemp? All right, Sir. Put her up. I am ready, but if you love the sacred cause of the South and hate the infernal Lincoln and his minions as you hate me whom you think a Yankee, you will not let my good Rebel blood spill in vain. Your promise! Then string me up! I’ll stretch hemp well if I have your word that this gets through. Promise me—Oh, promise that the message I bear gets to Richmond.”

Again there was an examination of the code.

“ You’re on your way to Richmond now aren’t you, Captain Cole? ” one officer asked the other.

“ Yes—got a cattle car loaded with Yankees for Libby. I’ll see that this gets to Richmond. But he’s a spy or I don’t know one. Go ahead and string him up I say,” and mounting their horses the officers rode away.

The rope was slipped over his neck, one end thrown over the limb of a tree and half a dozen hands were ready. There was some whispered discussion, almost a dispute. It was about the code message found on him. Some of them hesitated, but at last they moved on the rope and the harsh circle tightened about his neck.

“ Just a minute—a last request. You fellows don’t believe me. If I were one of you and thought you were a damn yellow-bellied Yankee—an infernal Lincolnite—I’d do to you just what you are going to do to me. I don’t blame you. But remember the message that’s gone on, and before you give the big jerk, let’s all unite in one last long Rebel yell—the kind that warms the blood of the South and freezes that of the North. A yell for the success of the code Captain Cole has taken! ”

A couple of the men whose hands had hesitated to grasp the hemp loosened and the leaders said, “ Yell! My God, yes—yell! ”

Then did Del Norcrosse emit such an ungodly and terrifying Rebel yell as cut the still night like a titanic knife

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and reverberated up the valley and over the wooded river slope. Three times it sounded, the last time his expectant executioners joining with him.

Again there was a pause and whispered discussion.

Then without warning Del Norcrosse dropped heavily to the ground.

"Dead—he's dead," said the first man holding a torch over him. "Bled to death by the puddle under his foot."

"Dead? Better for us if he's not. I'm saying that code was the real thing. What we better do is take care of him—not kill him."

After trying several moments to arouse him they decided to act on the last spokesman's suggestion and deliver him to Confederate lines.

To this end they fastened him over the back of a horse and with blood dripping from head and foot Del Norcrosse was carried away.

CHAPTER IX

“ HE WALKS ALONE ”

AMONG the Stars and Stripes that had been flung high by loyal citizens in Fredericksburg, was the one that waved over the printing-plant of James Honeycutt. Several times it had been hauled down by sympathizers with the seceded states and twice it had been stoned by men angered at the bold utterances of his paper. Warnings had come to him, sometimes of the malice of enemies, sometimes of interested friends, but it was not until an August day in 1862 he was assured his only safety lay in flight. At five o'clock on a hot day a rider coming at full haste on a foam-flecked horse, told him to lose not a minute. The Confederates were rapidly advancing upon the city.

Crossing the car-bridge which spanned the Rappahannock River, he took his hurried way toward the north where at no great distance General Burnside's had his headquarters.

Beyond the danger line Honeycutt stood on a hill and looked back. The sun was throwing its setting rays over the steeples and house roofs of the beautiful city, over the Virginia hill-tops in the distance and the lovely valley of the Rappahannock. Peace seemed brooding for the hush of coming night and the multicolored glory of hill and valley was a baptism of blessing.

Contrasted with this was the awful grandeur of a mighty army with guns planted and all drawn up in battle array—fierce weapons of war manned for destruction of life and property, red for the slaughter of humankind. And over rampart and bulwark the Stars and Stripes floated—high in the golden glow of the sinking sun. A great pain gripped the heart of the solitary man. Why these slaughter breathing death machines? He lifted his eyes to the emblem con-

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secrated to the Freedom of Mankind. "My God," he exclaimed in an agonized whisper, "twelve months ago we would as soon have thought of saying 'Down with the Bible! Down with the Cross of Christ!' as with you. And now they cry 'Down with the accursed Stars and Stripes! Down with the infernal Star-Spangled Banner!' What goad this side infernal regions can drive men to a speedy hell like secession? May God have mercy on us!"

Reaching Washington he found the frightful effects of war centred and intensified. A Southern city of the third class, it was at best unfit for the demands now made upon it. Its avenues were superbly long and broad but the buildings that bordered them were for the most part low and shabby in the extreme. Scarcely a public building was finished. Scaffolds, engines and pulleys everywhere defaced surfaces of unfinished marble. Washington's monument not half done and long since deserted, stood like an appeal, mute and helpless in a babel of wartime confusion. Everything worth looking at seemed unfinished and everything finished seemed an apology for a shameful existence. Not a street car ran in the city. A few straggling omnibuses and clattering hacks were the only conveyances to take members of Congress to and fro between the Capitol and their remote lodgings.

In springtime the west end of the city was a slough of impassable mud. Capitol Hill, desolate and dirty, stretched away into an uninhabited desert high above the mud of the West End, both arid hill and muddy plain showing alike the blighting trail of war. Above every hill-top forts bristled and at every gate-way soldiers were entrenched. Acres and acres of shed hospitals lay in the suburbs while churches, art galleries and homes had been opened to the wounded and dying of the Union armies.

The grind of the army wagon was endless; the roll of the anguish-laden ambulance seemed never to cease and the rattle and roll of wheel was often pierced by the scream

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of some sufferer being hurried to the hands of doctor and nurse.

Marching troops filled the streets. Many of them carried virgin banners untarnished by the blood and grime of battle. These marched proudly up Pennsylvania Avenue their bands playing "The Girl I Left Behind Me" as if sure victory and glory were to be theirs. Over against the newcomer marched soldiers sunburned, foot sore, weary of body and heart-sick with wrecked hopes and long defeats, their torn and blood-stained banners floating above their serious faces.

As regular as breathing the drum beat was heard and every hour was alive with the "tramp, tramp, tramp" of troops going and coming.

Until the Stars and Stripes was fired upon, Washington had been the Capital in name only. Never had it been to the American as it was to George Washington, an object of personal love and patriotic devotion. To the New Englander, Boston had been the hub of the universe; to the Southerner, New Orleans was the Mecca; to the Westerner Chicago was the heart of the world, while New York was the pride and boast of every section.

But with the moving of the first troops—the firing of the first guns, all this was changed; Washington immediately became the red, beating, palpitating heart of the Nation. No longer was it only the name of a city. Mothers' boys from prairie, from hamlet, from plain and village camped in the Rotunda, slept on the stone steps under the shadow of the Treasury, rested in the chairs of members of Congress, while an overflow stacked their guns at the door of the President's home and covered its floors with sleeping volunteers.

On the heights Blue-coats guarded the city in sleepless vigils, for in a moment—in the twinkling of an eye—the keen point of the assassin's dagger had been uncovered—the protection of Washington became the one agony of the North and its possession the radiant hope of the South. National songs inspired patriots and the emblem of that

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Union against which the hand of destruction had been raised, shook its starry folds in hopeful security over every high place.

As Honeycutt took his way to the Willard Hotel, a bit of Scripture came to him, words about the shedding of blood without which there is no salvation. Blood shed! Was not the life blood of a Nation being let? Would there be salvation? Was there enough of blood in loyal veins?

In the hotel lobby he sat down to rest and listen. There was an unbroken babel of men's voices as in groups and clusters they talked, parted, met others and talked more.

The well known words, "All is quiet on the Potomac," were heard. And again, "The Rebels are marching on to Washington! The Rebels are blocking our river communications:" and like talk. Sometimes the talk turned to the President. Honeycutt was not a Lincolnite. But he prided himself on being a Virginia gentleman and was not prepared to hear a Senator refer to the President as "That damned idiot in the White House." This remark brought out the story of the man who, when he was asked where he could study monkeys was advised to get acquainted with "the baboon at the other end of the avenue." The talk then turned to the appointment of Stanton as Secretary of War. Stanton's brutal absence of decent personal feeling toward Abraham Lincoln had not been unknown. The abuse he heaped upon the President was disgusting even to those unfriendly. He never referred to the Chief Executive in any other way than as "that gorilla at the White House" or "that ourang-outang." At the bar, where as lawyers the two had met some years before, Stanton refused to stay in the case with "so low and cunning a clown." Yet, knowing all this as he did, President Lincoln called Stanton into his cabinet and the acceptance was prompt. "And now," said the man who had told this, "what do you think of the mental calibre of a man that would do like Abe Lincoln? I vote him a damn idiot—damn idiot!"

"Are there no Christians left?"

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The question was asked by a listener who had not before spoken. Half a dozen pairs of eyes were turned toward him—a portly figure in priestly attire with a kindly face and steady eye.

“What has Christianity to do with war and that abomination in the White House that fathers it?” This, the man who had spoken before asked.

“You curse him for returning good for evil. You revile him for brotherly kindness to an enemy. Yet did not the Christ of Christianity say ‘Return good for evil;’ ‘Bless them which persecute you;’ ‘Love your enemies’?”

“That was not his compelling motive,” another speaker made haste to say. “He saw in Stanton fit material for what he wanted. It was his usual sagacity. It overcame all decent pride.”

James Honeycutt had been interested in the conversation. Now his interest turned to the man who had tried to project the Christ note into it.

A moment he studied him. Then holding forth his hand he said, “Am I mistaken in thinking I know you? Chini-guy, is it not? I have heard you lecture.”

“You are not mistaken.”

“My name is Honeycutt. I have been interested in your words. I am not an admirer of Abraham Lincoln. I voted against him. But I hope I shall never do less than stand for fair play. He is charged with many crimes and his every effort is charged with sinister design. In one of the last issues of my paper I nailed an abominable lie. It had been charged by the editor of a shrieking secession paper that Lincoln was never opposed to slavery until he saw a chance to be elected by the Black Republicans. In my own paper I published a few lines from a speech he made in Peoria in ’54, when he said ‘Slavery is founded in the selfishness of man’s nature—opposition to it is his love of justice These principles are an eternal antagonism Repeal the Declaration of Independence—repeal all past history—you still cannot repeal *human nature*. It still will be the

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abundance of man's heart that slavery extension is wrong, and out of the abundance of his heart his mouth will continue to speak'."

" Noble words! Noble words! Do you know him—know him personally? "

" I have never seen him."

" Ah—you are the loser."

" You know him then? "

" I have the honor to call him *friend*. Is there a word means more? It has been said 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend.' Such is my love for Abraham Lincoln. He saved my name from calumny. He saved my life itself. It was a law suit in a country court—it is of no interest to you, but for him I would give my last drop of blood! For him every breath is a prayer that those who have sworn his destruction may be smitten helpless by the Almighty! "

There was a depth of feeling in the words. Honeycutt was silent a moment. Then he too spoke with enthusiasm.

" I know how you feel—I know! I know! Not about Mr. Lincoln. My love is for Virginia—mother State. Old Dominion towering like a colossus above the other states! Neither the terrible thunders of the North nor the lashing furious billows of the South though rolling against her mountain high could have driven her in a fair fight from the Union for which she must now be the common burial ground. Conspiracy! Preparedness! Civil War was precipitated—not wanted! The constant cry was 'War! War! War!' It was put in the minds of peace loving people and shouted in their ears. It was talked in parlors, dining rooms, kitchens, hotels, livery stables, barber shops, cars, steam boats, on the highways, in the hedges, in pulpits, on rostrums, by day and by night, at home and abroad, at all times, in all places, everywhere under all circumstances! War! War! It was constantly affirmed that old Abe Lincoln was sending all his Black Republicans into the South to bind her people hand and foot—to make slaves of us and our children

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forever. On all occasions the cry was heard 'The Hessians are coming! The vandals of the North are upon us! The hordes of Old Lincoln are at hand to ravish fair Virginia! Will we submit to the slavery of the blue-necked, white-livered Yankee with his detestable flag of the Federal Government over us? Never!' Such was the contagious fever scattered abroad by traitors to our Union! Oh the trickery, the villany, the deep, black damnable rascality that was employed to coax, swindle and FORCE Virginia out of the Union. Clerical demons—corrupt and devilish politicians! Conspiracy!"

"Clerical demons," you say.

"I used the words. I mean no offense to you, sir, nor to any loyal clergyman or friend of such. But I said—I say, 'Clerical demons'—aye! Aye for beneath the folds of the white robe of the Church lie hid the keys of *empire* and an iron sword!"

Honeycutt's listener was leaning forward, his face clothed with absorbing interest as he said softly, "Conspiracy! I would that I might talk freely with you."

"I will betray no confidence," and Honeycutt waited anxiously through the long minute before his answer.

"Not yet—not yet. It would be like pouring oil on flames. But I will see you again. Meantime you see the President—if only to look upon him."

"I have no business with him. I have no desire to crowd my way into one of his receptions."

"No—no—not a reception. He is not the real Lincoln on these occasions. Behind a smiling face the real man hides for a brief time that a Nation's burdens may be concealed. There is a shaded roadway beyond his house. Here he walks alone in the twilight—in the evening—in the midnight. Into Washington pours a river. From live battle fields it comes, and its flood-tide continually rises higher as its tributaries in far places pour in their waters every drop of which is a man—a human being like ourselves. The tide of this river runs red—red with blood from the split

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veins of men like you and me. And the washing of its waves makes moaning like a myriad of suffering souls, tongueless yet not mute. Along the bank of this river are pale-faced children and weeping women—a countless throng which no man can number. And the river takes its way through the heart of Abraham Lincoln. And the countless multitude of pale-faced ones hold their hands to him and pray that he stop the crimson flood-tide and stay the meaning. He walks alone except his God walks with him, else so good a target for man's hatred would walk no more. At eventide—in the gloaming—in the dark, he walks alone! ”

CHAPTER X

UNDER THE MIDNIGHT MOON

JUDGE LAURY had been home for a few days, when the Emancipation Proclamation was issued. If the Southland had been a gigantic water pool and a mountain had been dropped into it, the waves could not have dashed higher than did the infuriated waves of anger following the pen stroke that struck the shackles from three million slaves. "The most diabolical instrument ever conceived by human mind!" was said of it far and wide in a thousand different wordings even though in Richmond it was greeted with laughter.

With his cabinet the President of the Confederacy read it section by section. The age-long significance of it was at first overlooked. Like some dastardly joke too big to be perpetrated it seemed, and they enjoyed it with derision.

Judge Laury was not given to excitement. He said little. But his indignation ran deep, and upon his arrival home from Vicksburg where he had heard the report, he gave vent to his opinions as he told the news to Mrs. Laury and Ann Leuin.

"And he calls it a 'war measure.' Hypocrite! Liar! His sympathy was always with the black. As long ago as his first message to Congress he said 'Labor is prior to and independent of capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital and deserves much the higher consideration.' Hear this Margaret? *Labor is the superior of capital and deserves much the higher consideration.* And in that same address he again refers to labor when he says 'Much of the National loan has been taken by citizens of the industrial classes whose confidence in their country's faith, and zeal for their country's deliverance from present

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peril have induced them to contribute to the support of the Government the whole of their limited acquisitions.' Labor! Labor! He would establish an oligarchy of labor—black in the South and foreign white trash in the North. More—he throws out these opinions to catch the ear of England's laboring classes knowing that with their sympathy, England will be slow to acknowledge our Confederacy. And as a specimen of as devilish lying as was ever framed, hear this from the same source 'It continues to develop that the insurrection is largely, if not exclusively, a war upon the first principles of popular government—the rights of the people. Conclusive evidence of this is found in the most grave and maturely—considered public documents as well as in the general tone of the insurgents. In these documents we find the abridgement of the existing right of suffrage and the denial to the people of all right to participate in the selection of public officers, except the legislative, boldly advocated, with labored arguments to prove that large control of the people in government is the source of all political evil. Monarchy itself is sometimes hinted at as a possible refuge from the power of the people'."

"But our thousand slaves are not yet gone. Our broad acres are not yet rendered worse than useless to us! The black oligarchy has not yet lifted its hand! And by all the blood and brains and gold of the Southland, it shall never be!"

"Didn't Abe Lincoln suggest buying all the slaves?" Ann Leuin asked.

"Yes," Mrs. Laury sighed "and sometimes I think it would have been better had our statesmen accepted his plan for payment of slaves. If the North is determined to fight until we or they are conquered, it may be a long time, so fearfully, eternally long! Even now it seems years and years and years since I have seen our boy."

Further discussion was interrupted by the hurried entry of Mammy who exclaimed, 'Massa! Missy! De niggers at de

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qua'ters am done skeered crazy. Dey say a ha'nt am walkin' on de place! "

"Who started this silly scare, Mammy?" Judge Laury asked.

Before Mammy had time to answer several house servants came in, their eyes bulging with fright.

"Mars Jedge, dey am a ha'nt a walkin' on dis place. Hit am de ha'nt ob Geo'ge what went off wid Mars Gus."

"There is no haunt. Go back to your places and keep quiet."

While he spoke voices outside were heard calling, "De ha'nt! De ha'nt!" and the next minute Mammy on looking out exclaimed Oh Mars—de ha'nt hit am Geo'ge."

Ann Leuin ran to the door and called back, "It is! Sure enough George is here!"

"George! George!" Mrs Laury cried excitedly. "What does it mean? Let him in! Come in—quick George!"

Travel stained, ragged and with his shoes hanging in shreds to his feet, George entered the room and bowed low as he said brokenly—"Massa—Missy! Miss Ann Loon!"

"George—Oh George! Is all well with my dear boy?" Mrs. Laury cried.

"All am well wid yo' dea' boy," he answered again bowing.

"Thank God! Thank God!"

"Why are you here?" Judge Laury asked. "Have you deserted Gus?"

"No suh, Massa, not dat," George's voice was a bit unsteady, "but," he went on, "Mars Gus—he tol' me to come. I'se been a long time gittin' hea'—a mont' I'se been on de way, kaze de walkin'—hit am bad. But I'se hea' now, Massa, an' I'se brought a letter."

"The letter—quick!"

George took a small package and a letter from his inside pocket which he handed to Judge Laury, after which he stepped back, bowed his head and held his ragged hat before his face,

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“My dear Mother and my darling sister,” the Judge read. “My life these days is divided between wearisome toil and feverish excitement. I have been in battle after battle as you know, yet not a hair of my head has been harmed. There is much to tell, too much to begin just now. I will have time for this when I am back home. Just now I want to write a word about George. Not only has he cooked my food, but when rations have run low he has gone foraging and many a time has come back with a chicken or goose or side of meat. Sometimes when I have been in the trenches, flat on his stomach he has crawled long distances to me and either held my gun while I ate the good food he brought, or put the food in my mouth while I kept my gun level with one hand on the trigger. Once our line of march took us through a free state where a mulatto woman with a rich farm fell in love with George and wanted him to stay and marry her. I told him I would give him his freedom if he wished to stay. Throwing himself at my feet he begged me to kill him rather than that I should leave him, protesting that he wanted no freedom save that of belonging to me. Never a white skin covered a truer heart than has George. Give the house servants a greeting from ‘Mars Gus’ with special remembrance to my dear old Mammy. When you write to father tell him I keep well to the front and do not know the sensation of fear. Do not give yourself a moment of worry about me, beloved little mother. All is well. A kiss on her smiling dimple for the belle of Mississippi—sister mine.”

“A fine letter,” said the Judge handing the paper to Mrs. Laury and the negroes shouted, “Hooray fer Mars Gus! Hooray!”

“You have something else?” Mrs. Laury said to George.

“Yessum, Missus.”

“Something Gus sent?”

“Yessum, Missus,” and he handed her the package.

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Unwrapping it she found the little Bible. "What did he send it home for?" she asked George.

"Hit am got mo' letter in de back."

"Read this, too," Mrs. Laury handed the book to her husband.

"Dearest of mothers—I wrote a day ago but am writing again by the dim light of a nearly burned-out camp fire. I was asleep for the night when in a dream I seemed to hear a wood dove calling, as they call in the thicket beyond our hillside. It woke me up and made me think of Mammy and for a moment I felt the same sensation of fright I felt on a long ago day when Mammy told me and my little sister that Bible story about the pale horse. 'Dat pale, pale hoss wid a hide lak cotton what nobody cain't nebber git away f'om', she said. I think her description must have been realistic. I wonder if Ann Leuin remembers it? At any rate I was half frightened to death. When she saw this she gathered me to her kind black bosom and told me she would not let the 'pale hoss' get me, and finally consoled me by promising to go with me in the event that the fearful 'hoss' should get me and she could not effect my release. I had not thought of all this in years. Yet that dreamy call of the wood dove brought it back to me as distinctly as if it had happened yesterday. I suppose I must have heard a dove calling at that time. We are going into battle tomorrow. A great battle it will be if numbers make greatness, for thousands will face each other to the death. But I am not afraid. Mine is a charmed life and I will live to finish the splendid career you and father have planned for me. The moon is lovely tonight—bright, with a white light! How it must be shining over the fields of Mississippi! And how the mocking birds must be singing about the dear old home! I feel very far away tonight. Perhaps I will not get home until victory crowns the just cause of the South Morning: I think I was nervous last night. How far away and unreal that dreamy call of the wood dove seems now with the battle trumpets sounding everywhere! I am leav-

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ing the back of this page to tell you the rest when the battle is over."

Judge Laury turned the page. George, who had been growing visibly nervous, now sobbed. "Where is the rest of this?" the Judge asked.

"He didn't write no res', suh."

"Why George?" Mrs. Laury asked sharply. "Why didn't he write the rest?"

"His han'—his han', Missus—his han' couldn't hol' de pen no mo' an' his eyes, dey—dey couldn't git no mo' light."

"But you said all was well with my dear boy," Mrs. Laury cried.

"Yessum, Missus—all am well wid de dea' boy. He—he done pass on lak dem what de books names heroes," George sobbed.

"What do you mean? Tell it." Judge Laury commanded.

With a groan George threw himself at the feet of Judge and Mrs. Laury. "O Massa Jedge—O Missus—O I cain't tell hit! I cain't—I jes' cain't! O Mis' Ann Loon—yo' brudder!"

The negroes gathered in the hallway began setting up a sound of lamentation, calling imprecations on the Yankees and wringing their hands. Judge Laury put his arm around his wife who was trembling with apprehension and to the wailing negroes he said, "Be quiet. Now, George, get up and tell us what there is to tell."

"Yes suh, Mars Jedge. Hit wuz de night befo' de battle. I wuz on de groun' at Mars Gus' feet when I heered him say, quiet lak, 'Geo'ge, Geo'ge, is you hearin' anyt'ing?' I say 'What kin' ob t'ing?' He say 'Pears lak I'se been hearin' a mou'nin dobe callin' in de moonlight.' I say 'Dis yer am no place fer no so't ob a dobe?' Den Mars Gus laugh. Den he got ser'ous lak again an' talk 'bout Mammy an' de ol' 'pale hoss'; an' he talk 'bout de home folks an' say, 'I'se gwine write 'nudder letter to my own darlin'

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white Mammy—dat dea'est Mammy what a boy ebber had.' An' Geo'ge, he say, ef anyt'ing happen, tak' de letter home.' So I promise, an' he wrote in de book, kaze dey wasn't nothin' else. Den he went ter sleep. Den mo'nin' come, an' de sun riz, an' Mars Gus laugh an' say 'Doan tell nobody I got skeered kaze I drempt I heered a mou'nin' dobe an' heered Mammy talkin'.' Den come de battle. Hit wuz thunder an' smoke an' red hot iron flyin' in de air an' shoutin' an' screamin' an' hosses runnin' crazy lak wid no riders twell de day wuz nigh gone. Den a few come back. But Mars Gus—he didn't come back. An'—an' I sta'ted to fin' him. O Massa, does you want me to tell on?"

"You must tell it all George."

"Yes suh, Massa. I hunted on de fiel' till I found him. He was layin' curled-up-lak. His face wuz white 'ceptin' some blood an' dus'. He hel' out his han' an' smile. O Massa—O Missus—dat smile—hit broke dis yer nigger's hea't—such a smile lak dat! An' he say, 'Gawd bress you ol' boy! I knowed you'se gwine fin' me. I'se glad you come kaze I habben't long. I'se been bleedin'.' Den he kotch my han' an' shet his eyes an' res'. Den he talk again an' say, 'Geo'ge, I'se not gwine home no mo'. I wanted to see de ol' home. An' Geo'ge—an' den his voice got shaky jes lak he wuz a li'l' boy an' he say 'Geo'ge—Geo'ge I want my Mudder—ef I could only see my Mudder—jes once—mo'.'"

A sharp cry from Mrs. Laury followed by a chorus of wails from the negroes interrupted the story. Wiping his eyes Judge Laury said huskily, "Let them be quiet—let us hear it all. He would have it so. Go on George."

"Yes suh, Massa. An' den he res' a long time fo' he say, 'Geo'ge doan let 'em t'row me in de ditch. Hit'll be some job but put me away to myse'f an' mak' de place so dat when hit am all ober you can tak' me back home an' put me to res' on de hill whar de p'tridge mates in de tall grass an' de honeysuckle trails an' de mockin' bird sings. Tak' me back dar whar my ol' black Mammy can train de vines

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an' my da'lin' white Mammy can come an' cry kaze I'se not comin' home no mo'.' All dis time dey wuz prayin' an' groanin' goin' on 'roun', an' sometimes de screechin' ob a hoss what wuz done fer yet not daid. An' I say 'Mars Gus, lemme tote you outen all dis.' He say, "Tain't no use. I'se jes got a li'l' longer. Put some water on my haid—hit bu'n so.' Den I wash his face outen a daid man's canteen, an' cool his bunin' haid, an' bresh back de ha'r. Den I wetted dem dry lips, an' he say—ober an' ober he say—'so good! So nice! So good!' An' den he smile, an' smile—an den—O Gawd Massa—Missus! Den he wuzn't dar no mo'. Mars Gus wuzn't dar. Jes de body ob him layin' in de moonlight, kaze all dis time de moon been climbin' up towa'd midnight."

"I knowed hit! I heered de call—*de call!* O Mars Gus! "

It was Mammy. Her sharp cry was the signal for a fresh outburst of weeping. But again Judge Laury commanded silence.

"There is something yet. You have not finished George. What did you do when you *thought* my son was dead? "

"I stayed by him, suh—all de time by his side twell I seed de light comin' ob dem what was so'tin' out de livin' an' diggin' trenches fer to kiver de daid what lay in piles lak lebes in winter. While I wuz studyin' whar could I tote Mars Gus, one ob dem docto's come 'long. He say 'What fer you set nussin' de daid? Put 'im on de pile yonder an' git busy wid live ones what needs you.' An' I say 'Am he sho 'nuf daid?' He look a minute an' say 'Daid, nigger? He done been daid fo' hours.' Den he pass on. I got Mars Gus up quick an' toted 'im 'way f'om de broke wheels an' pieces ob guns an' pieces ob dem what wuz once humans, to a place under a tree. An' I took his swo'd and digged a grabe, an' I laid Mars Gus in, keerful-lak he was a baby. De moon wuz shinin'—shinin' lak de day. Hit shined in de grabe twell he look lak a angel wid de smile yet on de face. I wanted a flow'r but dar

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wuzn't none but bloody grass. But Massa, Missus—Mis' Ann Loon—ef he didn't hab no flow'r he sho had tea's. When time come to t'row de dirt my han's, dey wouldn't wo'k no mo'. Den I lay 'cross dat grabe an' I cried twell tea's drap down on po' Mars Gus lak de rain wuz fallin'. An'den—O Massa—is you gwine mak' me tell how I kivered him up an' left him? Doan, Massa! I cain't—I cain't tell how I t'rowed dirt in on my dea' Mars Gus. Missus doan want to hea' hit! Mis' Ann Loon, she doan want hea' hit! I cain't nebber tell how I piled de groun' an' lef' him alone. But Massa I sho did cut de tree deep—sich deep cuts I sho can find hit. Den—den I sta'ted home an' lef' Mars Gus."

There was a moment of awful, intense silence. Then Mrs. Laury screamed, "No! No! You didn't leave him! My God, you *didn't* leave him!"

"Mammy—take care of your mistress a moment, Ann Leuin look after her until I get these blacks quieted," said Judge Laury huskily. He left the room to put a stop to the wild wailing and outcries of the slaves.

For a moment Mrs. Laury stood pallid, motionless and still. Then she fell into Mammy's arms crying, "It is killing me! It is killing me!"

"Quick Mis' Ann Loon, call Mars Jedge. Missy am dyin' too! Da'lin—da'lin' Li'l' Missy, doan tak' on so!"

"But Mammy, he is gone! He is covered up under the ground! He will never come again! I shall *never* see his face—*never* hear his foot-steps—*never* hear his voice again! O my boy—my boy! I want you! My poor little boy! Never!"

"Hit wuz de shadder angels walkin' in de moonlight," Mammy sobbed.

"I cannot stand it—I *cannot*! What shall I do?"

"Is you fergot 'bout de stren'th'nin' angels what de good Gawd sen' when we'se 'bout to break down? When dar am nothin' else to do we prays an' angels mak' us strong."

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“ But I cannot pray, Mammy! ”

“ Den yo’ ol’ black Mammy gwine do hit fer you kaze I’s nebber seed de time de good Gawd tu’ned away nor de angels wuzn’t nigh ’bout.”

With a great sob Mrs. Laury dropped on her knees beside a chair moaning like one wounded to the death. “ Pray for me, Mammy! ”

As Mammy knelt, Mrs. Laury leaned against her breast. Putting one strong arm around her mistress, the black slave raised the other high above her dusky, tear-stained face. The Judge and Ann Leuin entered the room in time to hear her say, “ Good Gawd, sen’ de angels berry nigh dis po’ li’l’ white mammy whose hea’t am done broke—clean broke—kaze her boy ain’t nebber comin’—home—no—mo’.”

In that minute Judge Laury took a staggering step. Looking quickly, turning her tear-dimmed eyes to his face Ann Leuin saw that it was ghastly. “ Father! Father! ” and she gripped his arm to steady him.

“ My God! My God! ” he exclaimed hoarsely. “ In all the realms of the damned can there be a blacker demon than the monster who sits at Washington and brings on *this*? ”

CHAPTER XI

“GOOD-BYE LIBBY”

SOME long time after his Blue Ridge adventure, Del Norcrosse awoke from a fitful sleep of uncertain duration, to find himself in Libby Prison, and when his mind began like some tired thing in a strange place to struggle back to old landmarks, he remembered his mission to the Confederate general's camp, and his white face took on a smile as he again saw the rockets going up and bursting against the dark sky. Then the dash on Greyhound—the safe jump into the tree—the slow and dangerous journey to the river—the sullen water—the boat—the hound—the guerillas—the rope—the last yell.

Of the last horse-back ride he took, dropping blood along the way, he knew nothing, nor the manner in which his heel was bandaged nor his trip to Libby among other prisoners. Nor did he remember that the majority of them had died like rats during the weeks he had burned with fever. His strength returned slowly and when he would have walked he found himself a cripple, and when he saw his face in a mirror, a long, deep, colored scar straight as a sword blade lay across his forehead.

The hospital at Libby was on the second floor; directly above it was the quarters of over a hundred Union officers where Norcrosse was now placed. Both of these large apartments were above a cellar which was the dumping place for straw from the hospital beds and such other refuse as the place gave off. From this cellar to the house-top a wide and deep chimney ran.

Escape from Libby! This was the thought in every prisoner's mind; for the thousands who perished there, a vain hope.*

* See New International Encyclopedia, Vol. XIV, p. 51.

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It was the big chimney that suggested to several officers a possible means. Putting their heads together they finally devised a plan for digging in the cellar toward a sewer running into a basin, the digging to begin near the big chimney. Those who were in the secret secured in some way a rope by means of which working parties were let down the big chimney at night by the officers on the third floor. By day the rope was concealed in one of the straw beds which the officers were required to look after themselves.

Del Norcrosse was taken into the secret and was let down through the chimney to the cellar where night after night, while the hospital prison slept, he did his part in the Herculean task of digging. The dirt was hidden under the straw and other refuse matter in the cellar and trampled down. When the workers had tunnelled some distance underground it was found difficult to haul the dirt by hand and a spittoon which had been furnished the officers in one room, was made into a cart and by means of a string drawn in and out of the tunnel.

After nights and nights of digging with knives, chisels and finger nails, the working party found the way stopped by piles at least a foot in diameter, driven into the ground. For a night they were discouraged. Then the urge for freedom overcame disappointment and again they started to work on the heavy piles with pen knives and other small instruments. They chipped and picked and chipped and picked until at last the piles were severed and the tunnelers commenced again.

It was not far now to the sewer and inspired by the experience of Jean Val Jean, whose adventure was recounted, they dug with feverish interest, hoping for escape. When, however, the sewer was cut into, the flow of filth and the stench were so great that several of the party fainted while one man fell into the sewer and was dragged out more dead than alive.

The failure so to escape called for a council at which it was decided to tunnel under the wall and under Carey

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Street. On the opposite side of the street from the prison was an old out-house with a high fence around it used as a receptacle for boxes and goods sent to prisoners. The prison guard was outside this high fence. The plan now was to tunnel under the wall, across the street and under the wall of the other building, to stay inside until the darkness of night, escape in squads and push for the Union lines as fast as possible.

The digging was begun again, and again an almost impossible obstacle was encountered. The brick wall which was three feet thick, went too far in the ground to be tunnelled under. The hole must be cut through it. Then came nineteen days of hard and silent night work at the end of which time the hole led through the brick wall.

Tunnelling across the roadway was not such slow work but it was doubly dangerous because just over the heads of the workers, the guards walked. Once the displacing of a stone made considerable noise and one of the sentries called to another and inquired what the noise was. The guards, after listening a few minutes, concluded all was well, and returned to their beats. This hole was stopped up by inserting into the crevice a pair of old pantaloons filled with straw and bolstered with boards taken from an old floor.

When the workers announced that the tunnel was open over a hundred prisoners decided to make the attempt to get away. Quiet settled over the prison on the fateful night. Led by Colonel Rose of New York they started. It was understood that the working party was to have an hour's start of the others. Before the hour had passed, however, the remaining prisoners became impatient and were let down through the chimney into the cellar.

The tunnel was so narrow that but one man could get through at a time. Each squad carried with them some provisions in a haversack, but owing to the cramped exit supplies were limited.

All night the Union prisoners wormed their way through the small cramped tunnel. Between one and two o'clock

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the street lamps were put out. This darkness added safety to the escape and gave opportunity for many who were too sick and feeble to escape otherwise, to be dragged through the tunnel and taken to places where they would be safe for a time.

As Del Norcrosse emerged from the hole inside the old warehouse he heard a guard within a few feet of him sing out, "Post No. 7, half past two in the morning, and all's well!" and he smiled and wondered just what degree of cursing would be done next day.

Once out, the prisoners proceeded up the street, keeping in the shadow of the buildings and passing through the city toward the East. Their course had been mapped out by an officer while in the prison. Several routes were to be taken, one to Norfolk or Fortress Monroe as there were fewer enemy pickets in this direction.

Weak from his long illness and terribly lame, Del Norcrosse found it hard to keep going and while passing through the swamp near the Chickahominy he had the misfortune to fall and open his unhealed wound. The pain and fresh danger was not, however, without its compensating good, for while Norcrosse lay on the ground with a couple of officers ministering to him, one of them chanced to look up and see at no great distance down the river, a swamp bridge across which men with muskets paced. The course, therefore, was changed and they went through more swamp, hoping to find a place to cross the river. They found a safe approach to the water here only twenty feet wide but it was deep and the refugees were too tired to swim. It was providential at this time that one of the men chanced to look up and see where two trees on opposite sides of the river had fallen, and lay with interlocked branches, so that by crawling up one tree and down the other the dangerous stream could be crossed.

After passing over the river, the refugees lay down on the ground and slept until sunrise. Their first stop the next day was at a humble negro cabin where they were given

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information about enemy pickets. Acting under advice of these friendly negroes they remained quietly in the woods until darkness had set in when they were given food which they ate like famished animals. When darkness had again settled they took to the road, having been directed how to avoid enemy pickets. Once they plainly saw the fire and smoke of an enemy camp. But they did not get near it, being so utterly weary they sank again to rest.

At daylight on the third day they started out going through the woods beyond which lay some cleared ground. A negro woman was working in a field. The refugees learned from her that enemy pickets had been all up and down the way looking for escaped prisoners from Libby. So it was necessary for them to lie low again until the darkness of night fell.

After several days, hunger drove them to a house which a negro said was occupied by a Secessionist woman whose son was in the Confederate army. Before giving them food she inquired who they were and where they were going. They told her they were fugitives from Norfolk who had been driven out by Butler. Her sympathies being aroused she gave them a fine dinner and told them how to avoid the Yankee soldiers who sometimes scouted in that vicinity.

With the information given by this loyal Southern woman they discovered the whereabouts of the Federal forces, when about fifteen miles further they came upon the main road, and here found tracks of a large body of cavalry. A scrap of paper found by one of the officers satisfied him the cavalry was Union, but some of the little group were suspicious, avoided the roadway and hid behind a fence until they saw the Stars and Stripes supported by a squadron of cavalry. It was a detachment from the Eleventh Pennsylvania Regiment sent out for the purpose of picking up escaped prisoners. Almost too tired to cheer at sight of the Union flag the fugitives from Libby gave themselves into the care of friends.

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It was during his first sleepless night Norcross penned a few lines to Ann Leuin.

“ My Darling:—If it were not for you—your love, I think I could not—would not want to live. So much of daring and danger, so much of pain, and so long the time since I heard from you I was sent on an errand of great danger into the heart of the enemy’s country—I dispatched my duty—I was overtaken by a band of Confederate soldiers who had discovered my errand—I escaped but with a slash across my forehead—nothing but a scratch. I mention it so you will not be shocked or surprised when you see me—I was chased by bloodhounds, one ran me into a river where we fought it out—he went to the bottom. I was captured by guerillas—hemp was put around my neck—I escaped with my life because of the God-blessed code you gave me for luck. It saved my life but they took it. Send me another—I was not hanged—I was sent to Libby for weeks and while you were watching for a letter I lay in a fever—I did not die—a number of brave Union officers with me said ‘Good-bye Libby’—I escaped—I am now well away from Libby—horrible Libby! As soon as I find where I am likely to be for a few weeks, I will write you and in the name of God send me a letter. I try to make the code—my hand shakes—the cross is not red, but I have spent enough red to color many crosses. Good night my beautiful, my beloved—my A.L.L.”

CHAPTER XII

“ DE DEBBIL’S LINKUM ! ”

WATCHING and waiting! Woman’s part since the male of her species engaged in his first bloody combat.

At the Laury plantation the watching instinct had grown keen as the waiting was long drawn out. Mrs. Laury was always watching for a letter from her husband—always watching the papers for war news and always watching down the long road and far, far beyond any visual point. Sadder the feminine watching habit when death has cut across its way, than while uncertainty yet lives.

Ann Leuin was not without keen and loving interest in news from her father, but her watching was for the letters that came from north of the Mason and Dixon line. Precious to the soul of the girl were these missives, containing always more of love than of war and sealed always with the sacred code. There were other letters, several from Bresler’s cousin in New Orleans. Through this friend Ann Leuin had heard from Bresler in Mobile. He had sent her messages which she had not answered. He had even gone so far as to write an apology for his reprehensible conduct while her guest. He had admitted his conduct might not have been what it should have been, but explained that he was ill, had not wanted to spoil the party by making complaints, had resorted to liquor as a remedy and had perhaps taken a little too much. This letter was not answered nor was it referred to in any writing to his cousin.

Then there was an occasional letter from Miss Katherine Cummins who had been matron in the school where Ann Leuin boarded but who was now a nurse with the Confederate army of the Tennessees. These missives were always interesting, but left a pain and a longing on the part of both Ann Leuin and her mother to do more for the Con-

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federate soldiers who were suffering and dying for attention, and for food and medicines.

For months before news of the death of Gus had come, the Leuin plantation had been at work under direction of Mrs. Laury, making soldier clothing, knitting socks, tearing up clean rags into bandages and putting up such dainties for the sick as could be sent by the relief committee working in Vicksburg. So close to the heart-quick of these Southern women had the war cut its horror that after the loss of Gus, all social life and pleasures had been given up. Judge Laury had taken the jewels away for safe keeping. Ann Leuin's party dresses and wide extended hoop skirts had been stored and her smaller skirts and plainer dresses only were worn. Slave girls sewed always, the negroes themselves going ragged and almost naked that the Confederate soldiers might have covering for their bodies as they fought for the Southland.

Visitors came sometimes to the big house, but it was to make plans for war service. Ann Leuin gave up many gay companions because they would not give up their gaiety. One companion she never gave up was her good horse El Capitan and every morning she rode with her curls flying and a song in her voice as if on her fleet-footed horse she could for a time ride out from under the black cloud of war. She could talk to El Capitan, too, and he seemed to understand. When the weeks stretched into other weeks and no letter came from her lover, she told her disappointment to El Capitan; sometimes she rested her head against his and cried. At such times he stood unusually quiet and when he saw tears in her eyes he lowered his ears slowly as if in recognition of her sorrow.

Many times she had gone across the cotton field and through the scented wood path to Swan Lake, but once only had she climbed the tree where she was a happy prisoner on a never-to-be-forgotten night. This time she took George. It was no longer summer. As George dusted the boat and threw out the fallen leaves, Ann Leuin walked around

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the pavillion which had been the scene of such brilliancy and so much pleasure. Dust on the broad steps, falling leaves—the suspended animation of summer that is the inbreathing of fall. Even the lake seemed in the quiet of expectancy and the flit of a solitary wing over its surface was but a reminder of days past. At the little garden-house she paused. The door stood open; she lifted the heavy wooden latch—closed the door, fitted the latch and moved slowly away. Looking back as George paddled the little boat from shore, Ann Leuin's eyes filled with tears.

“ I'se sorry fer you Mis' Ann Loon—allus sorry fer you an' li'l' Missy kaze he won't nebber come home no mo'.”

“ You are thinking of Gus again,” Ann Leuin said kindly.

“ Yessum, Mis' Ann Loon—I'se allus t'inkin ob Mars Gus—dat dea' boy! If Gawd had jes let me I'd been shot by dem Yanks a t'ousand times 'stead ob Mars Gus one time.” Dropping his face over his shoulder he lifted his forearm and wiped the tears away.

“ Gus—my darling brother! ” Ann Leuin choked as she spoke and for a moment the slave and the white beauty sobbed together.

“ George, let's not cry. It won't do any good. We must work now. I'm going up in the tree. There's something I want to see.”

“ Mars Thomas Jeff'son Bresla of Mobile—he wanted to see too.”

“ I thought you promised not to tell his name.”

“ I promised not to nebber speak hit to nobody at de big house. Is you at de big house, Mis' Ann Loon? ”

Ann Leuin laughed.

At the big tree George helped her climb and for the few moments she sat in the branches he scouted the edge of the canebrake hoping for a chance shot at some game. But no animal or bird showed itself and Ann Leuin was soon ready to go back. The letters were still white though somewhat overgrown. There was not a hint of red on the cross and

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its sharp edges were turning round by nature's way of healing wounds. She wondered what Bresler had wanted with the code. There was no pleasure in this question. She was sorry he knew it, though she gave no thought to any use he might ever make of it.

Many weeks had passed since any news had come from her lover when the mail brought Ann Leuin several letters, among them the letter Norcrosse had written after his escape from Libby. As she read the brief broken news of her lover's adventures and wounds, escape and sufferings, Ann Leuin's sympathies and excitement moved her to tears and indignation. Over and over she and her mother read it before she looked at any other mail.

"He will let me know soon where he is. When I find out I am going—going as straight as the bee flies to nurse him. He nearly died—he may die—I am going!" and from that day the watching was for the letter that should come telling her where to go.

Mrs. Laury bitterly opposed such an act by Ann Leuin. Southern girls did not even nurse Confederate soldiers. It was not permitted. How then would it be for a Southern girl to act as nurse for a Yankee?

"It might not have been proper before the war," Ann Leuin said, "but war changes everything but you, dear Mamma. You stay the same only sadder and more quiet since George came home. Father—when did you see such a change? He seems to think I am responsible for Del Norcrosse staying with the Union. I didn't do it and I am sorry he made the mistake. But is that any reason I should cease to love him if I could?—cease to be loyal—if I could?—cease to keep an honorable promise—if I could break it? Father knows I'm going to stand by Del Norcrosse if he does make mistakes. Why should he treat me with such coolness?"

"It is the war—my child. The loss of his only son has entered his soul like fire and he blames everybody on the other side. But your father's attitude, though a little cool,

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is not sufficient reason for you to go away to nurse a Union soldier."

"If father should get over on the Yankee side, should be all cut and shot to pieces and sick and lonesome and should want you, would you go to him? Of course you would. You *know* you would and father knows you would, even if it made him angry to mention such a thing as his turning Yank. I am glad I learned to nurse the sick—the little Union boy—he said I could make the worst of them get well. How I hope the letter will come soon!"

The other letter for Ann Leuin was from Miss Katherine Cummins. Apart from its interesting war comment it strengthened Ann Leuin's determination to nurse Del Norcrosse.

In her letter, describing a trip, she said,

"General B. was on the train. He and his staff had the ladies' car and the baggage car which caused a terrible crowding on the rest of the car. I could not help wondering what had become of our boasted Southern chivalry. It is not right to grumble in war times, but I could scarcely keep from it as from the baggage car where I rode I could see the general and his ladies arranging their toilets. It did not make me angry to see them occupying so much space because I wanted it. But my heart ached for some of the wounded men jammed into horrid close places. . . . I have just received a letter from a friend at home saying provisions are so high in Mobile it is impossible to live and speculators are making *piles* of money out of the misfortunes of their country. It will be a curse to them and their posterity after them for it is the very blood of their fellow-mortals they are making it of. I little thought that there was one man in the whole South who could be guilty of such a base act.

"Nor is this the worst. In a Mobile paper of the 14th a writer says he knows of four quartermasters who have made fortunes since the war. One when he entered the service was not worth a dollar. After being in office a year and a half, he bought a farm worth \$50,000 and has now retired with as much to live on. The other three are

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even worse. General Bragg made inquiry into the case, but as some of our most influential men had become his security to a large amount they managed to get him off safely. One wonders as this wholesale stealing is known whether these are some of the men who shouted and worked for a war they say is the 'people's war.' Before God, the *people* never wanted this war.

"How can they expect men to fight for them when they are taking the lives of their wives and children. They may shudder at the accusation but in the eyes of God they are murderers. But there is a day of reckoning and then may God have mercy on them if they suffer one half the pangs their greed has been the cause of. The South is a land flowing with milk and honey—enough food in it to supply us if the blockade should last forever. I trust our good men will rise in their might and drive these speculators from among us Mrs. W., my good helper and I, live like Sisters of Charity. We get up at four, breakfast by candle light, have real coffee without milk, hash and bread. Mrs. W. prepares toddies and eggnogs for the sick and often when duties are over we write letters for the boys to their mothers and the girls they left behind them There is scarcely a day passes I do not hear some derogatory remark about the ladies who are in the hospitals until I think, if there is any credit due them at all, it is for the moral courage they have in braving public opinion.

"In my mind there is no position a woman can occupy no matter how high or exalted it may be, for which I would exchange this one I have. And no happiness which anything earthly could give, can compare with the pleasure I have experienced in receiving the blessings of the suffering and dying. What a call to women of the South! Why do they not answer? If there ever was a time to try the women it is now. Why is it not proper for them to do everything in their power for their poor, half shod, half clad, half starved men? Are our women blind to the true principle of this war? There is more glory in the rags of the South than in all the glitter and gold lace that the Federals have in their possession! We hear discussion about the war—why it came—who was to blame. This is superfluous.

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We know the war came of Lincoln—Lincoln—born for war, elected by the Black Republicans for war—Lincoln—a name that will go down infamous in history.”

It was true as Miss Cummins stated, the war with all its bloodshed, destruction and heart sorrow was charged to one source. Even the slaves on the Laury plantation had been told that all the troubles that had come to the big house were caused by Abe Lincoln.

How well this teaching had taken effect was shown on a night when Mammy discovered a number of slaves missing. She went down to the cabins of the house slaves but found them deserted. Inquiry brought the information that they had gone out with a voodoo man to kill “de debbil’s Mars Linkum” at the edge of the wood.

Mammy reported to Mrs. Laury. “A nigger wid de evil eye wuz on de place yestiddy. I ’spec’ he done got de Laury niggers off to a voodoo meetin’.”

“I hope not, Mammy,” Mrs. Laury exclaimed. “Every uprising I have heard of has been traced to a voodoo. What shall we do?”

“Ef Li’l’ Missy let me hab a white sheet wid eye holes, yo’ ol’ black Mammy git ’em in—else I conjers de las’ one ob ’em!”

“You don’t know how to conjure anybody Mammy.”

“I knows how to mak out lak I does. I knows how to talk biggity ’bout de livers ob snakes an’ de lights ob lizards an’ de claws ob frogs what goes in de brew pot. I knows how to mak out lak I gwine call de sperits ob black cats wid green fire eyes what tracks de daid, an’ strange critters what blows a bref lak a daid dawg an’ pulls you into de grabe ya’d whar ghosts come creepin’ an’ crawlin’. I knows how to mak out lak. An’ ef dem niggers t’ink a ghost gwine conjure ’em dey’s gwine run home lak de win’.”

An hour later Mammy discovered a circle of slaves, each armed with a long stick, around a low fire which cast a weird glow over their dark faces. At one side of the circle on an uncovered earth mound sat a small figure with some

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semblance to the human form. What it was made of could not be told in the dim light—clay perhaps, perhaps a combination of mud and sticks. But Mammy very soon knew it was “de debbil’s Mars Linkum” and they were practising on it the black magic that must of necessity result in his death. Just as she drew near a weird and wild incantation began, the slaves shouting imprecations, pointing at the figure. Still singing they dropped on their hands and knees and commenced very slowly making their way to the object. It was then Mammy noticed that the curious man with the evil eyes who had crossed their plantation carried a snake. Fascinated she watched the circle follow the serpent toward “de debbil’s Mars Linkum”—almost forgetting her mission. When quite near the mound the man thrust the squirming reptile at the breast of the figure. This was to have been the signal for an assault by the crawling slaves, which by the blow of many sticks, would have annihilated “de debbil’s Mars Linkum” forever.

But just at this moment Mammy remembering her mission, and with a yell of fear and anger sprang into the circle glowing and shouting, “Come wid me! Come wid me! Death! Death! Come!”

There was a scream, a scurry and almost before she knew what had happened she was alone, even the voodoo having gone in another direction.

So fast did the negroes travel back to their quarters that when Mammy arrived she found them in bed and the cabins dark. But early next morning she was told over and over that death was walking the plantation after “de debbil’s Mars Linkum.”

“Let de debbil git him,” Mammy answered, “but doan you git foolin’ in de debbil’s business. Ef you does he sho gwine git you all.”

So it happened that although the Laury slaves did not have the pleasure of annihilating President Lincoln with their snake and sticks, they had succeeded in drawing the attention of death and the devil to him, certain their efforts would soon result in a termination of the war.

PART THREE

CHAPTER I

ON A LOVE TRAIL BLOODY

AFTER Judge Laury went to war he came home twice. The first time was when he returned with a mutilated arm to await Nature's healing process, to hear from George news that wounded his heart past the place of any healing. This second visit was a few weeks after Ann Leuin received the letter from Norcrosse telling her he would send his address and praying God that she write him speedily, the letter that had caused her determination to go to her lover as soon as she heard where he was.

Mrs. Laury had told her husband of Ann Leuin's determination to go to Norcrosse and had begged him to use every effort to keep her from carrying out so unheard of a plan.

To this end he too watched the mail, watched better than Ann Leuin, for into his hands the long-looked-for letter came. There was not a moment's hesitation in his act nor any misgiving of conscience in what he did. Without letting anyone, even Mrs. Laury, know of the letter, he dropped it in a wide-mouthed mantel-vase used as a catch-all and here he covered it well. "If she sometime finds it," he said, "it may be too late for her to commit so rash an act, nor will she know whose hand misplaced the missive."

So Ann Leuin watched and waited and cried and prayed, and the days passed and there was no letter from Del Norcrosse.

Judge Laury had been gone some months when in looking for a mislaid letter from Miss Cummins, Ann Leuin drew from beneath the string and thread and cards and old letters a dusty envelope addressed to herself, at first sight

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of which her breath came quick and her fingers quivered with excitement as she tore it apart.

“ My darling one:—I have not written because—I may as well confess it, I have not been able. Once again in a hospital I went to pieces. Am together again and will pull out this time, scarred a bit but heart whole—and all my heart turning toward the sweetest girl in all the world. As I write the lines crook and curl under my hand. The nurse says I must quit. Write me—if you love me—write! Now is the time I need your love. If you could but tell it to me as you did that night in the tree—with your soft hand—I would be well! Write me. I will need your love to hold me up through tiresome days, if, as they tell me, my life for some time yet must be spent in a hospital. Be sure—”

A few lines of strange writing was some nurse's explanation of the unfinished letter. The patient was very ill. The letter he hoped for, if received, would do more for him than medicine. As the patient might be moved to some other hospital an early reply was suggested.

Ann Leuin looked at the date. The letter had been written months before. Who had hidden her letter—who had done this cruel, this wicked act? By the date the letter must have come when her father was home and none other than he would have dared to handle her mail.

With a heavy heart she answered the missive and yet with the hope that Norcrosse might have been detained. She prayed that her words might reach him. Then again she waited. But there came no response. Norcrosse was lost to her. Perhaps he was dead. If not, he surely would have written again even though she had seemed to neglect him so cruelly. Perhaps he had written and other letters had been withheld and concealed where they yet remained undiscovered. With this thought in mind she searched days but without reward.

There was one thing now that she could do; start on a search which would never end until she found him. If her expressed desire to nurse her lover in his sickness and suffer-

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ing had met such stout resistance from her gentle mother, she knew this other determination, if carried out, would break her heart. So in her mind Ann Leuin planned. She had often expressed a desire to help the sacred cause of the South by nursing its sick and wounded as Miss Cummins was doing and had once or twice spoken of joining her old friend.

To this definite plan her mother would raise two objections. The first would be the opinion that since it was not the practice of Southern women to nurse sick men—and strangers, it might be considered improper. The second would be the loss and loneliness of life for the mother without her daughter. Still, Ann Leuin mentally argued, it would be better this way than to unfold her real purpose.

“Mother,” she said when her plans were made, “my father has separated me from Del Norcrosse. Perhaps he is dead—perhaps dead to me forever because of a war-born hatred. I must do something to keep my heart from growing hard as my father’s has. I must have change—action—something new. I am going to Miss Cummins and help her nurse our loyal boys as we would wish our dear Gus might have been nursed back to life. You do not need me as our poor brave boys in grey do.”

Mrs. Laury cried for two days after hearing what Ann Leuin intended to do. But for the sake of her daughter and the cause, she gave her consent, and preparations were made for her to join Miss Cummins with whom she promised to stay at hospital headquarters in Chattanooga.

But if Ann Leuin could not talk freely with her mother about her plan, she could talk to El Capitan and with her arm around his neck and tears in her eyes she told him her troubles and plans and bade him adieu—for how long she knew not.

To Mammy she committed a message. “I’m going away,” she said when she found the old black slave sitting alone on the back door step, “going away to be a nurse.”

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"You sho is gwine mak' one mo' fittin' nurse, ef you did larn on a Yankee."

"I hope I can be much help. Mammy, you know I am engaged to marry Mr. Norcrosse. My father said I could. That was before the war when he liked him. Now he does not like him any more but I love him just the same. He has been sick, Mammy, sick and dying—and has wanted me. The letter came telling where I could find him. My father hid it—he kept me from going to him. It may be too late now—he may be a long time dead. But I am going to find him—that is, I am going to find his trail and get on it—and stay on it. You know what that means."

"I'se heered ob deer trails an' b'ar trails an' snake trails an' all so'ts ob trails 'ceptin' a man trail. An' I'se heered ob men folks gwine on trails, but I habben't nebber heered ob no white lady goin' galavantin' off on no trail."

Ann Leuin laughed and said, "But women do go on the trails of men. There was Evangeline—she hunted for a man for years. And there was my own Leuin ancestor, she stayed on a trail of a man for years—these kinds of trails are love trails, Mammy, love trails."

"Yessum, I 'spec' you knows. But dis trail you'se 'spectin' to trabbel gwine be mighty bloody, Miss Ann Loon."

"A love trail bloody? I could never stand the sight of blood—unless—Mammy I believe I could wade through blood if I had to, for my dear, dear Del Norcrosse. Anyway I am starting out and will care for the sick, and comfort the dying as I go. I may be gone for years—and always looking for him—until I find him or his grave. And Mammy, I want to leave a message with you for my father. Tell him I shall not return to the old home until he can love me as he did before this awful, cruel, wicked war. Tell him I will not return until he can love again and let me love Del Norcrosse."

Mammy had lifted her apron to her eyes and her body was swaying gently.

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“ Don’t cry, Mammy—don’t cry.”

“ Who gwine stay wid yo’ po’ white mammy an’ look atter her? Mars Jedge, he’s done gone to wa’, an’ Mars Gus—dat bressed chile—he ain’t nebber comin’ home no mo’ an’ ef de Yanks ketches you too, yo’ white mammy gwine die wid a hea’t plum broke up.”

“ But I am not going into war Mammy. I will never be anywhere near the Yankees. I am going to help care for the poor boys who like our Gus, were wounded in battle. You will be here to look after my mother—you and George and Rosa.”

It did not take Ann Leuin long to get ready for her eventful change. Several plain dresses were made, and with her meagre wardrobe and a few necessary toilet articles, the proud and beautiful daughter of one of Mississippi’s richest planters started on a long trail the windings of which she could not see, nor its lights and shadows.

On her way to Corinth Ann Leuin rode in such a train as Miss Cummins had described in one of her letters. The General B. of her friend’s letter was a young officer whose broadcloth and trimmings were of the finest, whose voice was loud, whose manner was commanding and who seemed especially interested in entertaining the several ladies of his party.

From the car she was in Ann Leuin could watch the merry party who had a car of their own. Hers was crowded, and several men, too weak to stand, lay upon the floor. A sick soldier offered her his seat, which she refused. But unused to standing so long, she sat on the end of his seat. Once the broadcloth officer picked his way through the crowded car, seemingly without noticing the occupants further than to keep from stepping on those on the floor.

“ Who is he? ” Ann Leuin asked of the soldier.

“ They call him ‘ Captain Cole.’ He has been out in Virginia and Tennessee catching Yankees for Libby—or is just going—I couldn’t make out which.”

“ Captain Cole,” Ann Leuin said, “ I wonder how he

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would like to change places with some of these poor fellows he has walked over."

The soldier laughed painfully.

The night when Ann Leuin reached Chattanooga where she was met by Miss Cummins and Dr. Graham, who had charge of the hospital, she got her first vivid impression of hospital life in war time. Candles were scarce and the wards were so dimly lighted the patients seemed to be hiding in dark corners. And from their shadows came strange sounds. Once it was a rattle—rattle—a gurgling rattle and almost before it had ceased a voice from the shadowy place said, "Another for the dead wagon."

And in the first few weeks she came to know that, as Mammy had said, the trail she had started on was indeed a bloody one. Fresh blood and dried blood; red blood and black blood; dripping blood and clotted blood—bloody heads and breasts and hands and feet and legs and arms, and always the nauseating odor of blood.

From the sights and sounds of the hospital Ann Leuin took refuge in the quiet of walks through a bit of woods that lay near by. One day, having gone further than she had known, she came in sight of a water pool. A Federal soldier lay beside it, face down and over the edge of the water.

Her first impulse was to turn and flee, yet something in the appearance of the man held her. She stopped to look. The soldier was tall and slender. He had placed his hat beside him and the gentle breeze moved a lock of dark hair softly that hung from his forehead over the water.

As Ann Leuin studied the man her heart went beating like a trip hammer. Del Norcrosse! Could it be! Had he escaped from somewhere? Joy! She would nurse him back to health and strength. Silently she moved toward the water pool speaking his name. He did not answer. She hesitated, then thinking perhaps he had fallen, weak and faint, she moved to the opposite side where she thought she might see his face. It was in the water she saw it—a pale

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face, and indistinct. Again she drew back feeling that she might stand in the presence of death. But was he dead? She moved closer and started to bend over and speak when the stench of the dead arose to her nostrils.

Turning she ran as she had never run in her life, her face white with fear but her lips involuntarily saying, "I am so glad! I am so glad!" She had not found Del Norcrosse.

At the back steps of the hospital she felt the world receding, growing cold and grey and her feet slipping. Dr. Graham, waiting, caught her in his arms and called Miss Cummins.

CHAPTER II

FAREWELL MAMMY

It was a July day.

Union war-ships black and ugly on the Mississippi, had been for weeks belching out volleys of destruction against the defense of Vicksburg, and the reverberation of their sullen roaring had become familiar to the ears of the besieged who hoped against hope that the bull-dog grip of Grant would for once break unsatisfied.

On the Laury plantation the boom of the distant guns was the voice of the war-monster drawing ever nearer and causing endless fear and speculation. Long months before, Judge Laury had rejoined his command and for many weeks no word had been heard from him.

"De guns on de ribber-boats shootin' a heap," George said to Mammy as he entered the Laury sitting-room with a pitcher of water.

Mammy, who had just come in from the garden, removed her sunbonnet, using it for a fan as she said, "Dey am. An' de po' niggers in de qua'ters am scared stiff kaze a man what passed say de Yanks gwine git Vickbu'g. Dey am prayin' mightily axin' Gawd to hol' off de Yanks. De white folks hab been axin' de same t'ing. Dey's been holdin' prayer meetin' special fer dat pu'pose."

As they talked Mrs. Laury came in saying with a heavy sigh, "The guns! The guns! My God, will the end of this never come!" and she sank into a chair.

"You is tired, Li'l' Missy. You mus' res'."

"There can be no rest Mammy as long as this fearful war continues. How I wish I might be a child again just for an hour—and forget it all."

Mammy sat down and smoothed the apron over her ample lap as she said. "Come Li'l' Missy. You am allus yo' Mammy's chile, honey.

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Mrs. Laury hesitated a moment. Then she moved to Mammy's lap.

"Now, honey chile, put yo' haid jes he'e on yo' Mammy, an' shet yo' eyes an' Mammy'll bresh yo' ha'r an' smooth the ache away. See—dis am de way, li'l' one—dis am de way," and she brushed Mrs. Laury's hair gently.

"How good your fingers feel, how kind your touch. "It is restful, Mammy, and I feel for the moment like a child. How fast the years have gone since I was little and you sang to me this way."

"Dey sho do trabbel fas'. Yo' white mammy knowed dey wuz goin' fas' lak you does. 'How fas' de shuttle fly' she say, 'weabin' de web ob life.' I 'members dis kaze I use stan' by when she wuz weabin' an' hol' de yarn. She wuz young den, Missy, younger'n you is now. Ol' Missus lef' her shuttle long 'go. But her words 'bout de odder shuttle what am made ob days and yea's, I t'ink ob hit. De days what hab de weddin's an' de home comin's am de blue an' red threads what goes into de clof. Dem days when sorrow comes an' dyin', am de black threads. An', honey, we got to tak' dem all kaze hit tak' de black ob life to show us de shape ob life's roses. Does you 'member yo' Mammy?"

"I remember her face and that she used to sing."

"Sing? I hea's her yet—hear's her voice goin'—"

Fear not I is wid you
O be not dismayed
Fer I is dy Gawd—'

The song was brought to a sudden end by the sound of a rapidly approaching horseman and the next moment a Federal officer in full uniform stood at the steps. His mission was briefly stated. He was to take possession of the place.

"But this is my home, my own private property. By what right, Sir, do you enter here and order me to leave?"

"By the right of victory in a long, hard contest. By right of the rules of war, madam."

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“ Are there no rights, no sacred rights the rules of war respect? ”

“ The one sacred right that war respects is the might of the sword. War is not a creature of intelligence or heart, madam. War is a game played with teeth of steel and breath of fire. Yet even this infernal game is played according to the rules of give and take. Your soldiers, as brave a lot as ever faced a hopeless situation, have been giving us for months. By the fortunes of war, we now take. Among our brave men are many sick and wounded. This place, your home, will make a comfortable hospital. As such, it will be preserved.”

During this conversation Mammy had stood with eyes fastened on the officer her black fingers clutching nervously at the strings of the bonnet she had hurriedly put on again. She now spoke.

“ Shet up yo’ mouf, you trashy, onery Yank! Who am you dat you rides in he’e an’ orders my Missus to git outen her home? I dunno who you am; I dunno whar you f’om, I dunno whar you gwine, but you doan git dis house nor nothin’ ’bout hit while dis ol’ black Mammy kin fight! You gwine bring yo’ blue debbils he’e to eat up what li’l’ we got lef’ is you? You done kilt Mars Gus an’ got Mars Jedge shut up some place, but you cain’t put Missy outen here. I’s gwine git de hide ob a snake an’ de liver ob de cat an’ de claws ob de frog an’ conjer you sho! ”

The officer looked at Mammy a moment and then laughed. The angry old slave was about to speak again but Mrs. Laury shook her head. To the officer she said, “Pardon my slave. Can you expect her to see justice in what you do when her mistress cannot? It is not a house you drive us from. It is a home. It is not a plot of ground you rob us of, but that sacred place where those we love lie sleeping and where—where—O sir, I cannot tell you—but our boy—our one beloved son will never return—never” and tears dropped over Mrs. Laury’s cheeks. “Must you rob us of the

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pitiful consolation the hope of bringing his dear ashes home to rest after this awful war is over, gives us? ”

The officer's voice was a bit unsteady as he said after a moment of silence, “ Madam, a man's appreciation of mother love is like mother love itself—a thing apart from the color of the coat. I sympathize with you and give you my word as a Union soldier that the sacred spot where you would put your son to rest shall not be violated, nor shall anything be wantonly destroyed. Such valuables as you wish to take with you, you will have time to collect before I return at sundown with my suffering and dying.”

All jewelry and silver had already been taken to a secure place and the gold had been well hidden. The log house on the Swan's Neck had been made comfortable, looking to some emergency and hither boxes and bundles were carried by slaves, while other servants took El Capitan, a cow and a few chickens to the lake side.

The few movable belongings had all been sent when Mrs. Laury, in looking over the big sitting room heard her name called in a whisper.

“ What am dat? ” Mammy gasped. “ De sperit ob Mars Jedge? ”

“ Sh! Sh! keep still,” the voice commanded.

Turning to a closet the door of which was partly open, Mrs. Laury was amazed to see her husband.

“ Sh! Sh! ” he cautioned as she started toward him. “ I slipped in the side way—am just out of prison—there's a price upon my head and I'm tracked. I wanted to help you but I must get away quick! Quick—a disguise of some kind. Here, hide this,” and he threw out a bundle which Mammy, taking up, found to be his big cape and soft hat.

“ Li'l' Missy am too scared to he'p you Mars Jedge, Mammy'll git you gone all safe. Geo'ge—you—tak' my close an' put em on an' gib yo' close to Mars Jedge in de closet. Doan say nothin'—poke em in. Den you put my close on an' be Mammy.”

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The old slave had stepped into a corner and hastily removed her sunbonnet, blue dress and apron which she gave George, who went out with them. She then wrapped the long cape about her, pulled the hat over her eyes and started across the room to Mrs. Laury when a shot was heard immediately followed by a second, both of which went through the big cavalry cape.

With a stifled cry, Mammy dropped to the floor. As she fell a voice close under the vines said, "At last—the damn Rebel!" And an answering voice said, "He'll never shoot another squad down at sunrise."

At the sound of the shots Judge Laury started out, but Mammy who had fallen near the closet door said, "Git back! I isn't hurt. Git back an' hurry an' git away."

For a moment the sound of rapidly retreating feet was heard. Then Mrs. Laury raised Mammy's head saying, "Mammy! Mammy! You say you are not hurt but here's blood! You are hurt!"

"Der am no hu't—not much Missy. But de time hab came. I didn't tell you Li'l' Missy, but las' night de shadder angels wuz a-walkin', an' I heered em callin'—callin' in de moonlight—same as dey wuz callin' dat darlin' ehile, Mars Gus. I wuz skeered hit wuz Mars Jedge dey was atter. But hit war yo' ol' black Mammy. She am gwine pass on."

"Don't Mammy—don't talk so. You shall not die. I will not let you."

"Der ain't no use tryin' to patch up yo' ol' Mammy. Somet'in' done broke loose an' my insides am leakin'. My bref come ha'd. Hit time fer Mammy to hab her res'. De Blue-coats will soon be stan'in at de gate—den I'se gwine on."

"Mammy! Mammy, what can I do for you? I must do something!"

"Dar am one t'ing I hab allus wanted."

"What, Mammy? You can have anything."

Closing her eyes Mammy smiled, breathed heavily for a moment and opened her eyes with a start saying, "How

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fas' de shuttle fly! How fas'! How fas'!! I put de weddin' wreath on yo' Mammy. I wuz de fust to hol' you in my a'ms. I nussed you at my bres'. I dressed you fer yo' weddin'. I wuz de fust to hol' Mars Gus in my a'ms—dat bressed, bressed chile. I wuz de fust to hol' dat sweetest doll-chile ebber borned—our Miss Ann Loon—her teeny fingers clawed into my ha'r an helt it tight—so tight—I nussed de chilluns. When sickness struck em down I watched wid em an' when de hot li'l' han's ob dem what died wuz coolin' off, I fol' em fer de layin' away. When yo' white mammy went off wid de shadder angels she say 'Lub her—lub her fer me, Mammy' an' Missy, dar habben't been a day neider an hour nor a minute I habben't lubed you. Now de time hab came. I'se gwine pass on an' I wants—wants one t'ing."

Mrs. Laury was sobbing as she answered, "Yes Mammy—yes, yes. What is it?"

"I wants my grabe on de hillside jes' long de foot whar dey gwine lay you an' close by whar Mars Gus gwine be put when de wa' am ober! I wants to be allers close to you, Missy."

"Yes—yes, Mammy."

"An' Missy, in de shadder world I'll tak' keer de li'l' ones what's gone on an' look atter Mars Gus same as I done here twell you come. An' when de time come fer de shadder angels to call you, den I'se gwine ax de good Gawd cain't I come back to tak' you through de Valley ob de Shadder so hit won't seem all strange an' skeery lak' to you."

Mammy paused for breath and closed her eyes. As she did so soft strains of music coming from beyond the gate reached her ear. It was sundown. The soldiers had arrived and as they waited sang,

"Many are the hearts that are weary tonight,
Wishing for the war to cease—
Many are the hearts, looking for the right
To see the dawn of peace—
Dying tonight—dying tonight,
Dying on the old camp ground."

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Opening her eyes Mammy asked, "What am dat I hea' what soun's lak angels?"

"It is the soldiers singing in the sunset."

"Dey doan soun' lak bad pussons. Dey soun' gentle lak an' kin'."

"Perhaps one of them is dying."

"I 'spec' so. I 'spec' we uns gwine t'rough de Valley ob de Shadder togedder. Well—hit doan matter. We all come into de worl' alike—black an' white, an' when we goes out we doan wea' neider de blue nor grey—But, Missy—de shuttle am flyin' so fas' so fas' an' I has a message wid Mars Jedge."

When he knelt beside her she said, "I'se so glad you come Mars Jedge. I gotta gib you de message Miss Ann Loon—dat beautiful angel chile done gib me fer her dea' fadder. She say, 'Tell him de wa' done tu'ned his lub to hate an' I ain't comin' home no mo' twell he lub me ag'in an' let me lub.' Doan hate no mo' Mars Jedge, doan hate! I'se hated—I'se hated ol' Mars Linkum twell food tasted nasty. But de bref of Gawd what's blowin' t'rough de Valley ob de Shadder done took it all away. We's all Gawd's chillun—blue an' grey is His'n. I cain't nebber hate ol' Mars Linkum no mo' kaze he's Gawd's chile too—he am—Gawd's Linkum! Gawd's Linkum, Mars Jedge."

Mammy spoke with pleading, but the lips of the Confederate soldier could not shape the response she wanted. Dim eyed Mammy listened, disappointment on her face until Mrs. Laury said softly, "Yes, Mammy—God's Lincoln—God's Lincoln."

"Mars Jedge," the dying slave whispered again, "I'se in de Valley. Is you got a message fer Mars Gus?"

"Mammy," it was in broken voice and with wet eyes Judge Laury said, "Tell my son his father says if he shall search in heaven a thousand years he will not find a whiter soul than that of his old black Mammy."

Her head fell back. But once again she spoke. "De shuttle—hit fly—so—fas'. You mus' hurry—we mus' all

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hurry! Li'l' Missy, I'se gwine on. Good-bye—my—darlin', darlin' chile—good—'' She caught the thin white hand of her mistress and pressed it passionately to her lips. Then it dropped. The head fell back on the lap of her mistress who bent above it sobbing. "Mammy—Mammy—Mammy."

It was while the Union Soldiers were moving into the Laury home, George dug a new grave on the quiet hillside, and here where birds mated in the low-hanging boughs and the sweet mimosa trailed undisturbed, Mammy was left in the keeping of the Shadow Angels whose voices she had so often heard.

CHAPTER III

AT LOOKOUT

IF it had not been for Doctor Graham, even Ann Leuin's firm resolve to stay on the trail of a lost lover, meanwhile ministering to the suffering in Confederate hospitals, might have weakened and she might have fled away to the solitude of the Swan's Neck for the world seemed unmasked by war, and hideous beyond compare.

Drawn to him from the beginning by his face, his voice, his courteous manner and spotless personal appearance, Ann Leuin found herself watching Doctor Graham as with him she labored in the corruption and stench and pitiless agony of war's backwash, as one disappointed watches a new hope, as one disillusioned watches a fair reality, or as one hungry grows satisfied. From every other person she had ever known Ann Leuin found Doctor Graham different. When all the train of horrors bred by war were charged to Abraham Lincoln and he was held to be an infamous monster, Doctor Graham's voice was never one of those raised in accusation. When the Yankees were abused and cursed, Doctor Graham took no part in the condemnations. Instead he seemed especially tender and careful of enemy prisoners brought in and Ann Leuin very soon came to know they loved him with feelings too deep for expression—a love told only with eyes and hand pressures—such a love as she was sure the Christ made manifest as He walked on earth among the sick and suffering of His day.

In addition to the ward-patients, Ann Leuin discovered another class which made a strong appeal to her sensitive nature. These were men whose minds had been shattered by the horrors of war—mad they were like animals. One was a soldier who had killed his captain. He was heavily manacled and died in his chains. Ann Leuin felt great

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relief when she knew he had been carried to the dead house. She had wondered if the officer he was charged with having killed was anything like Captain Cole—Captain Cole who let tired women stand and sick soldiers lie on the floor that he might have a whole car for himself, his extra amount of luggage and the lady friends that accompanied him.

To Ann Leuin, who among men had known nothing but the chivalry of Southern gentlemen, the intolerable snobbery and inexcusable selfishness of men like Captain Cole was unforgivable and that there were such men in the Southland was a part of the unhappy knowledge she was gaining. Ann Leuin's work was not in the operating room, but in wards where she bandaged and bathed and soothed; where she served eggnog and toddy and arrow root gruel; where she sang softly sometimes and wrote last letters and held cold hands feebly groping. It was in the wards she had opportunity of watching Doctor Graham and when he found she was interested in Union soldiers, he gave her opportunity to serve them. As the blue coated wounded were brought in she thought, "Perhaps this one will know something," and when she could make opportunity she talked with the Union men inquiring where they lived, where they had camped and fought and been prisoners, and mentioning the name of Norcrosse. But to them all the name was strange and never the slightest hope came to her of anything they said, until one day a young patient was brought in who Doctor Graham told her had been in Libby.

"Libby?" The first familiar word she had heard—the first ray of hope for news. It was of a fevered brain, the word "Libby" was spoken and for days there was no return to consciousness.

Patiently Ann Leuin watched, cooled the sufferer's brow and soothed his feverish fears. Norcrosse had been in Libby. Perhaps this Union soldier had been a fellow prisoner with her lover.

After days her good nursing seemed to begin to be rewarded. Ann Leuin's patient looked clearly out of his

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eyes and answered simple questions. But the first time she mentioned Libby such a look of fright came into his eyes she trembled lest his mind might slip back into its disturbed condition. When she mentioned the name "Norcrosse", he seemed trying to remember something. Several times he repeated the word, then as if the effort were too great he said his head hurt—he would think again when he was rested. So he slept. The next day Ann Leuin tried again with but little better results though she felt sure from his manner he had known somebody named Norcrosse.

The third day Doctor Graham invited Ann Leuin to be one of a party to visit Mt. Lookout.

From her upstairs window she had caught glimpses of this splendid mountain and her love of the out of doors had drawn her desire toward it. She had been told of a natural bridge there a hundred feet high with water running out of the side. Miss Cummins, who had made the trip, had returned enthusiastic declaring the scenery to be more beautiful than that of Switzerland and Scotland and bemoaning the fact that no poet was making its beauties immortal.

Since the day of her unhappy experience walking in the wood when she found the blue coated body besides the water pool, Ann Leuin had done no outside walking. The trip to Lookout was in the nature of a prescription as well as a pleasure and Doctor Graham was surprised and disappointed when Ann Leuin thanked him sincerely for the lovely invitation but declined to accept it. Her reason for declining was no secret. The Union soldier from Libby had something important—very important he wanted to tell her. He had been trying for two days to tell it. After each long sleep he came a little nearer remembering.

With Ann Leuin Doctor Graham went to the patient's cot. Doctor Graham studied him carefully a few minutes, stood irresolute and then turned to Ann Leuin.

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“ Nothing so restores strength as long, unbroken sleep. We will be back before evening. You need the change almost as badly as your patient needs his sleep.”

So Ann Leuin decided to go and the moment the decision was made, hospital life seemed past and gone, life in the open and on the back of a horse just ahead, and her heart began a song. Standing beside her horse Ann Leuin's mind went back to Mississippi and her own El Capitan, and as she had spoken to her own good steed and touched him with her gentle hands, so she did the strange horse and they were strangers no longer. On his back and racing down the wooded way that led to the mountain road, Ann Leuin for the first time since she had left Mississippi, gave herself up to the old spirit of daring and life and quick action and laughter, and Doctor Graham saw, not a quiet nurse, but a new creature, a wild young creature full of life abundant, tingling with dancing blood and making music with laughter, childish in its pleasure.

Before the mountain climb was reached the river road led through some wild and splendid scenery; ravines so deep as to make the blue sky but a strip high over head and hill paths narrow as a ribbon. In dangerous places Doctor Graham kept near Ann Leuin but never for a moment did she seem afraid. Instead in the narrowest paths over the deepest gorges she breathed deep as if she were trying to draw in on her breath the wild beauty, the abounding calm and the spirit of vast expanses. There were four miles of climbing from the base of Lookout to the Point of Rocks—the highest point of their destination. From this summit the view was entrancing and the party stood silent as they looked away to where the blue scallops dimmed into the distance and marked the sky-line of seven states. Nearer, and yet spreading for miles about their feet, lay a landscape of indescribable beauty made by the windings of the Tennessee River which in the wooded plain made the waving fields and green pastures with the gentle slope between, look like a pictured collection of far, fair islands.

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Ann Leuin broke the silent spell. "Do you think it was on some such mountain point as this Christ stood and looked over the whole world that Satan promised Him if He would but fall and worship him?" Her face was turned to Doctor Graham as she asked the question.

"Perhaps. What a mercy the Christ did not yield to the temptation that is the curse of mankind—the love of gain. 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul'. I think of this when I see my fellow man making of the misfortunes of war an opportunity for the accumulation of riches."

"He was the Prince of Peace," Ann Leuin said. "How His heart would ache if He were here now."

"Do not put Him away so far. His heart does ache—for He *is* here now. Perhaps in that spiritual body that ascended to the Father He walks among men. Perhaps in the spiritual body He has stood upon this point and looked out over this vast panorama, so beautiful and peaceful. Perhaps He has looked beyond its peace to the rows of glittering steel, the belching guns, the weapons of destruction—man against man—brother against brother."

"You do not believe in war?"

"How can a man believe in wholesale murder and be a follower of Christ?"

"You wear an officer's suit of grey."

"Yes—when my country my beloved South went into war, then was no longer the time to preach peace. Then was the time to do one's best of merciful care to war's victims. But let us not talk of war. Let us get another view of the matchless valley."

The crowd separated and from different points viewed the valley. After a time Doctor Graham and Ann Leuin found themselves back at the Point of Rocks.

"When I was a boy," Doctor Graham said opening his pocket knife, "I had the habit of cutting initials on trees—initials of fair and laughing girls—one at a time of course—she who was queen of my heart at the time. Scores of

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trees have borne scores of initials. It has been years since I cut the last. Today, on this point, on this splendid and unmarked tree, I am going to cut the initials of the altogether most lovely of a lifetime. Have I your permission?"

"Are you talking about me?"

The question was asked with such childlike surprise Doctor Graham laughed as he answered, "Indeed yes. Is it so uncommon a thing for you to be told you are beautiful and lovely and that you are surprised when an admirer would cut your initials?"

"But they have already been cut—cut on a big and lonely tree far, far away—down by a Mississippi canebrake."

"I am not surprised. I do not know who could cut them, but this I say—that man, I care not who he be, cannot love you more than I could—if—nay even more than I *do*, Ann Leuin Laury."

Ann Leuin made no answer. Her silence was taken as a sign of favor.

"Could you love me, Ann Leuin—love *me*?"

"I do love you," she answered. "I have loved you always. You are the only real Christian I ever saw. But my love will not be worth much as I have no heart to give you—no heart wild with the joy of being near you, glad with big fullness at touch of your hand. Perhaps all such of my feelings have been drowned in blood and tears, forgotten forever because of moanings in the dark, pale faces grown still with no loved ones near, stars out the window and the crying of wind-swept trees. It is all so terrible! Does it destroy love—make it numb and then leave it to die as some weak and wounded thing is left to perish? I loved him so!"

"Is he living or dead?"

"I do not know—living perhaps—perhaps dead."

"Ann Leuin Laury—loveliest woman I have ever known—I would do no man the irreparable injury of taking you from him."

AT LOOKOUT

"You couldn't take me from this one—nobody could or can—if he is living."

"Splendid!" he exclaimed. "I knew you were this kind. But hear me—if he is *not living*—if you find it so—then—ah then."

"I will come back to you."

"Doctor Graham lifted her hand to his lips. As he held it there it was pulled away suddenly and he felt a pair of arms around his neck.

"Now you know I love you. I only kiss people this way I love very much—my father, Uncle Honey and you."

"And the other one—not him?"

"No—no—it's different with him."

"I see—I understand. Yet you will come to me some-time perhaps."

"If I shall find him dead."

When Ann Leuin returned to the hospital she hurried to the cot where her Union soldier had been left asleep. A stranger with a bandaged head lay groaning here. The other patient woke up for a moment only, asked for "the beautiful one," died and was carried to the dead house.

It seemed to Ann Leuin she felt drops of blood leaking from her heart. While she had sat in the sunshine on Lookout, she had lost her one chance of gaining information of Del Norcrosse.

CHAPTER IV

A LETTER FROM HOME

LONG before the end of her first year in war service, Ann Leuin knew by her own experience the soldier's joy and disappointment with the coming of the mail. As often as her own heart grew sick with the long deferred hope of a letter, she found it hard to remember that this too was a part of war's toll even though her reason told her that with bridges burned, railroads wrecked and the spoil of warfare fed to the flames, not one but many letters might be lost.

Oftentimes when her conscious mind seemed concentrated on her duties by the bedside of some sufferer, she found herself humming a song she had heard a number of maimed convalescents softly singing:

"Do they miss me at home?
Do they miss me?
'Twould be an assurance most dear
To know that this moment some loved one
Were whispering I wish he were here."

After the fall of Vicksburg, Ann Leuin watched the coming of the mail with feverish interest. What had the loss of the city meant to her loved ones? Were they living or dead? Had the splendid home gone up in flames or would its white pillared entrance sometime welcome her home? And the gold—her gold? She had thought of it as soldiers plead for milk which she herself had once gone out and begged; she thought of it as her eye fastened on a gay delaine dress pattern she turned from with a sigh to buy a calico instead. The gold—her share—what had come of it?

When the letter was at last put in her hands there was a small package attached—a heavy little package. But she put it aside, hastily breaking the seal read;

A LETTER FROM HOME

“ My darling child—my little Ann Leuin :—I have written you six times but have heard from you only once in months. I am sure you must have written. Perhaps you too have written six times—perhaps you have not received my letters. In these distressing times all is unnatural—heart sickening.

“ But what I have written before was of small interest beside that which I will now write you and I pray this reaches you safely. I am sending it and the gold by a trusted friend of your father’s who goes to New Orleans and from there to Atlanta. He knows the doctor of your hospital—if changes have not been made. At any rate I risk sending it to you. Your reference to calico dresses hurt my heart. I went to the wardrobe and trunks in hopes of finding something to send you. But your school-day dresses I had made use of for the servants and others. Your other dresses would none of them do for hospital work. Take enough money to get a pretty dress once more. Of the rest, be careful. When the Yankees took the home they did not get the gold. It is all safe. What I send is only a portion of your share but I cannot risk more, sending it as I do.

“ It was hard, cruel to give up the home. Yet the officers were I suppose as kind as such deluded men can be. Your father had the foresight to fit up the log house at Swan’s Neck. It is cozy enough—small—but you know there are none of us left. Gus—my tears come like a hot flood when I speak the dear name—Gus lies sleeping under the shade of the trees by day and the midnight moon—somewhere. Your father—his body maimed for life and his heart wounded forever—he too is—somewhere. My little girl—my one beautiful daughter—she too is far away—somewhere. My heart is starving for her. Yet it is better so just now, with the home given over to officers in blue—many of them young and handsome and not all of them so sick as to be blind to youthful feminine beauty. They treat me kindly—but you—ah, with you here it might be different!

“ George is with me, loyal and true. Your Rosa, since Mammy has gone, seems trying to take her place. Mammy!

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Dear old white-souled Mammy! Wait, my child, until I clear my eyes of tears! I hate to hurt you—yet this too—the passing of Mammy—is a part of the tragedy of war.

“The excitement of the fall of Vicksburg was increased by knowledge of your father’s presence at home. Hiding in a closet he told us murderers were on his trail—close on it. Whether they were Yankees or bushwhackers or personal enemies I knew not at the time. All I knew was that his escape was a life and death matter. Too frightened to think, I appealed to Mammy. As if an inspiration had come she took off her cotton dress, apron and sunbonnet she happened to have on and got them to George who dressed as Mammy, giving his clothing to your father so that he might escape. Taking George’s clothing into the closet, he threw out his military hat and cape. Mammy put these on. We did not hear or see anything at the window where the vines grow nor could one outside see in very well. Probably this is the reason they mistook Mammy for your father. She had just started across the room when someone shot. Thinking they had their prey as Mammy fell, the murderers went away. She lived a little while. I cannot tell you of her passing as it was, for it was more like the going to rest of a tired victor than an old black Mammy. Every word of her last faltering sentences is fastened in my memory and when we are reunited you shall hear all. She had grieved because of your estrangement from your father and begged him with almost her last breath to promise he would let you love Del Norcrosse. He was much moved by her entreaty but evaded promising. You know your father—his pride in his record of an unbroken promise, ‘A man’s name as good as a note’ has been said of him. Dear old Mammy was disappointed, but her kind face did not show it. Perhaps she had passed the last measure of Life’s disappointment. I am sure she had drifted beyond the place of earthly hate. Among the loyal sons and daughters of our Southland, none of white skin was ever more loyal than Mammy, if hatred of Abraham Lincoln be loyalty’s measure. Her expressions of abomination for this uncouth and brutal man were so

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extreme as to appear comical. Yet at the last she said, 'Doan hate! Doan hate! I'se hated—I'se hated ol' Mars Linkum twell food tasted nasty. But de bref ob Gawd what's blowin' t'rough de Valley ob de Shadder, done took it all away. We's all Gawd's chillen—Blue an' Grey is His'n. I cain't nebber hate ol' Mars Linkum no mo' kaze he's Gawd's chile too—he am Gawd's Linkum!' Several times she said the last words in a questioning way but it was not until I said, 'Yes, Mammy, God's Lincoln' she seemed satisfied. As if this were the last obstacle to her passing she said little more. Perhaps the singing just outside the gate had something to do with Mammy's transformed state of mind. She was always deeply moved with music and the sound of men's voices in faint melody was affecting, especially since we had been told a young man's life was going out as the breeze wafted the music.

"Mammy was put to rest where the babies lie. Faithful in life she was faithful in death and had it not been for her your father would have been killed instead."

"I did not go back to the home for some time after we were driven from it, and never intended to as long as a Yankee slept beneath its roof. But I did. One of the officers came to the Swan's Neck with a request. If he had been less courteous and kindly, I might not have listened. A favorite and brave youth of the regiment had been, by one of our men, shot blind. He was now in the delirium of fever and his crying for his mother was pitiful. They wanted a woman to come and sit beside him for a little time. How could I refuse so simple, so sad a request? Suppose it had been our Gus? Could any woman refuse? I went with the officer. He took me straight to Gus's room. My feet almost refused to move as I trod the dear old halls. My heart rebelled as I stood on the threshold which had been pressed by his dear feet since childhood. Nor did my first glance lessen my hesitation. Under a white sheet a slender body was outlined. A dark head, face to the wall, rested on the pillow. How often—O how often had I seen this before—when I had called 'Gus—Gussy boy—it's time

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to get up!' I did not call now. Overcoming my heart's rebellion I went to the bedside. I brushed back the dark hair from the hot forehead. The blinded eyes stared. The feverish hand felt for mine, pressed it and smoothed it and the lips said, 'Mother—my own dear mother!' He never saw—never knew any different for his delirium, never left him until he joined the multitude of slain boys whispering with their last breath 'Mother.'

"To save my soul I could not help getting interested in other patients and I went daily to their aid. The big porch where you had your bunking party was turned into a hospital ward with tent cloth hung between the pillars, and full of beds. The officer, who seemed to have taken me under his special care, told me what the men needed was something to make them forget their pain. Laughter was healing—if they could only laugh! The next time I went I took Mosey. Quite soon I heard peals of laughter, real laughter coming from the white beds. What do you suppose he was doing? Imitating 'Mis' Ann Loon'—showing how you talked to Jefferson Bresler and to Mr. Norcrosse—how they talked to you, how Mr. Honeycutt ate his chicken and others drank their wine. His flow of language was amazing and most ridiculous but I did not interrupt him. Since then he has spent half his time there. I suppose he has paraded all our family affairs and burlesqued our nicest manners and told volumes of fiction. But I do not mind. Mosey was always a thorn in my flesh. Now he irritates me more than ever and I am glad to have him where he is appreciated.

"The gold I send is in a stout little bag attached to a belt to be worn next to your body. Knowing your generous heart I must advise you again, even command you to take care of it. Self preservation is Nature's first law. The teeth of the war beast sink deeper and closer home with every passing month. Let nothing but a case of life and death part you from the gold. I give this seemingly selfish advice and command as the only protection I can offer my beloved child. You are all I have left. Take care of your-

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self. And should your own strength fail, remember the Lord God is a very present help in time of trouble. To Him I commend you daily—even hourly. With love—oh so much love—and a prayer for the speedy end of this cruel war—

Your loving, lonesome,

Mother.”

“P. S. I forgot to mention that one of the officers at our home is riding El Capitan. He wanted to buy him. Of course I said ‘no’—But so many horses have been stolen about here I offered to lend him, thinking the protection of a Union officer much better than mine. I saw him yesterday. He looked fine. If the Blue-coats save your horse my thanks will be sincere.”

CHAPTER V

PICK-AX LONG BOY

FROM the time the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers were opened up to Union vessels for hundreds of miles, Chattanooga was in danger, and repeated rumors kept the hospital forces there nervous with anxiety. It was even rumored that General Bragg intended to turn the city over to Rozecrans, or whatever Union general happened to come upon it.

Meantime, hospital life for Ann Leuin went on as usual; heavy wagons bringing in the wounded; the dead-cart taking away the dead; eggnog and toddy for the weak; gruel for convalescents; letter writing; bathing—soothing—sewing at night—and always war talk.

Miss Cummins had friends in Chattanooga who visited the hospital and she and Ann Leuin were sometimes invited out. But Ann Leuin never left the hospital after her Look-out trip except once when she visited the soldier's graveyard where the battle-scarred and broken bodies of men from every Southern State were put to rest in the continuously growing acreage of unmarked mounds—man's little heritage of earth.

On their homeward way Miss Cummins found an Alabama regiment camped in a grove of trees. There were few tents, most of the soldiers being protected from the weather by blankets stretched on three foot sticks. Thinking to find somebody from her home city, Mobile, Miss Cummins stopped. Ann Leuin's acquaintance in Mobile was limited to Bresler, and when she learned from Miss Cummins that Mobile was Captain Cole's home also, she had no desire for further Mobile acquaintance.

Once more they stopped on their return trip, this time to watch soldiers work on the fortifications. They were cheerful but admitted that they were only kept working for

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fear they would forget how it was done, since it was conceded that Chattanooga must fall into the hands of the enemy.

Finally the exciting time came. Union forces had reached the opposite bank of the river and the shelling might begin at any moment. Hospital flags were hastily put up and preparations made for flight. The hospital force was divided into small groups to be sent to different places, Doctor Graham keeping Miss Cummins and Ann Leuin with him.

After leaving Chattanooga Ann Leuin found herself at Kingston for awhile and at Cherokee Springs—moving before the enemy's southward march. But wherever they went the stream of wounded and sick and dying kept flowing to them. In the sweltering summer the suffering and danger was of one kind—anguishing thirst, the quick dissolution of mangled bones and tissues, and blow-flies. But with all the horrors of hot weather the hearts of nurses and doctors went out in deepest sympathy to the sufferings of the winter, when half clad and unprotected soldiers bivouaced foodless, fireless and tentless. One winter battle Ann Leuin never forgot because of the human wreckage that came to her from it and the fragments of description the few who survived were able to give.

All through the long winter night both armies had been pelted by driving snow and hail and many of the soldiers on both sides were frozen to death before morning. An intermittent firing was kept up by the pickets, and the groans of the wounded, who lay shivering between the two armies, calling for help could be heard when the low whistling wind stopped to take breath. At such times too the muffled sounds that came from the front told those who heard that reinforcements were continually coming.

For three days the battle raged—bleak and cold. Each night the men bivouaced on their arms on the frozen ground, their blanket made of snow. In the morning they were roused from their icy beds to stumble stiff and shivering into

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their places in the ranks. The battle ground itself seemed to have been planned by Nature to add to the sufferings of the battle. It was made of hills and valleys stretched across ravines and broken ground and into forests whose trees hung heavy with sleet and snow. Every hill top bristled with cannons which kept vomiting their deadly discharge on the men massed below in the hollows, and every such position taken was carried by a storm of human beings in the face of sheets of fire and raging tempests of molten hail. As these charges were made and the dead rolled back into the hollows, the gaps in their ascending ranks were quickly closed and stepping over the dead and wounded they pressed on determined and silent as death, reserving their fire until they reached the crest of the heights when with furious and exultant shouts they poured out their volleys of shot and flung themselves like an avalanche on the enemy and drove in the bayonet.

Throughout the three days the noise of battle was like the roar of a tornado as contending forces surged and resurged through the leafless forests, defiling the snowy earth with their fruitage of the blue and grey and black and red—the bodies of man and beast laced and linked together with crimson stains.

Few of the wounded could be removed from the field while the fight lasted. There they lay, some two and three nights uncared for; and many freezing to death. Hundreds who fell in the beginning of the battle when the ground was soft and muddy, were frozen into the earth; and it was often necessary to cut them out of the ground when attention could be given them. In this deplorable condition they were taken to make-shift hospitals. The removal of these wounded was horrible torture for there were few ambulances and the wagons and carts generally lacked springs. In these crude vehicles the poor soldiers were jolted and pitched down precipitous heights where they had lain, two or three days and nights, encased in bloody and frozen uniforms. Any convenient shed, barn, house or church received

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them. They were laid on the bare floor, their wounds undressed, their frozen clothing unchanged, faint from loss of blood and extreme bodily anguish, and hundreds died miserably before relief came to them.

It was from such a scene that there came into the kind care of Doctor Graham with several Confederates, a Union prisoner called Pick-Ax Long Boy, so named because he had been literally picked from the frozen mud and was three inches more than six feet high. Because of her interest in Union soldiers he was put in Ann Leuin's care.

However useless his long, wasted body might be, his powers of speech remained intact, and no patient in the hospital was so much enjoyed as was Pick-Ax Long Boy.

Ann Leuin very early found out he had never been in any location where Norcrosse was likely to have been. He was from the Ozark Mountain region in Arkansas, back where the Hurricane Creek runs into Big Mulberry and it was of life in his native haunts he talked incessantly—how he trapped the red fox, the grey wolf and smaller fur bearing animals; how he shot deer and bear and wild turkeys; how he picked squirrels from the cucumber trees, knowing just how long it would take the squirrel to eat the ripe fruit, and having the shot ready just before the last seed was gone; how he traced bees and brought down trees containing honey by the tub full; how he caught the possum in the high gum tree; how Hurricane, which he called "Harrykin" picked up water from the shed of three mountains, pitched and plunged down its narrow channel rolling stones as big as houses and piling up débris in tree branches; how the red-horse shoaled in the shallows in the spring and the trout bit in the blue pools in the summer-time—all these things he told with endless variations and incidents, and the telling was to him a continual joy. He seemed to scent the fragrance of the rhododendron on the mountain side, the damp of the willow bordered waterways and to hear the ripples running; to hear the call of the wood thrush and the scream of the hawk.

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Long Boy's reason for being in the Union army was always interesting for a newcomer to hear. Ann Leuin had been told by many Union soldiers that they did not like Lincoln but fought for the saving of the Union. Long Boy had not entered the war to save the Union. Knowing little and caring less of it, his interest in the Union was of secondary importance.

"Th' war'd been runnin' on some time 'fore we heered of it in our country and we hadn't never heered of Abe Lincoln 'til a feller come up fer to git some soldiers. He said this here Abe Lincoln got up the biggest fight ever fit. 'Who is this here fightin' Abe Lincoln?' I says. He says, 'He's a feller from the West was born and raised in a log cabin. Then says I, 'I'll go fight. I was born and raised in a log cabin. So was everybody else I know. None of them got to be president nor stirred up such a powerful fight. I'll help this log cabin boy win it!' That's how come me to be wearin' a blue coat. Pretty good reason I reckon?'" His explanation always wound up with the same question.

Ann Leuin cared for Pick-Ax a number of months—came to look on and be fond of him as of some natural live thing transplanted from the far away Ozark country. He was given good care, but ice and snow and sleet and bullets had done their worst and he grew thinner and weaker until he spent most of his time on his back. It was after he had taken to his bed that there came a quick order to move to Ringgold. The enemy was coming. Wagons were loaded and the procession started toward the next town south. Doctor Graham with Miss Cummins and Ann Leuin waited until the last two wagons remained. One was piled high with bedding on top of which rode an officer's wife and a number of children too young to walk. On a mattress in the other wagon Pick-Ax and a young Confederate officer had been placed. Doctor Graham, Miss Cummins and Ann Leuin went in this wagon. There were several streams to cross but they were all easily forded until they came to one of uncertain depth. The sight of the running stream

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acted on Pick-Ax like a tonic. Forgetting his weakness he rose to sitting posture and color came into his cheeks as he made note of bending shores, drooping branches, mirrored pools and running shallows. He even expressed a desire to get out of the wagon and wade the fords.

When the stream was actually reached and was found to be running swift and seemingly deep, there was a halt. This was an opportunity for Pick-Ax. And while they were losing precious time trying to decide whether the stream could be forded, Pick-Ax climbed slowly down over the wagon wheel, saying, "There's only one way to find out. She runs like Big Mulberry. Many's the time I've tried her out at the Deep Ford to see if my horses could keep bottom. It's easy—easy. Just you set here while I get into her. I'll cross her and tell you if the horses can make it."

"But Pick-Ax," Doctor Graham protested, "you are not strong enough to cross this stream."

"Yep—that's why I feel good—God! you don't know how good it *will* feel. I've starved for Mulberry. Now I'll be fed up on clean water—runnin' water—runnin' deep."

"But Pick-Ax, we don't want you to drown. Don't try to do too much."

"I can't never do too much—too much for all you've done for me. Rebels is the finest folks God ever made and if it wasn't for leaving pore old Log Cabin Abe to fight it out without me, I'd be one myself."

From behind a clump of trees Pick-Ax waded into the stream. It was waist deep at the step-off. They saw the water rise across his back to his armpits. Once only, when he struck the current proper did he swerve. Quickly steadying himself he went on again wading carefully.

With anxious eyes Doctor Graham and the nurses watched the thin, slow moving figure in the running water and it was with a sigh of relief they saw him gain the opposite side.

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When they reached him he was still breathless from the exertion. His wet hair clung close to his emaciated face and the hollows in his flushed cheeks were water rinsed. He smiled with the glad joy of a boy and waved his hand toward the shining water as they lifted him back onto the mattress beside the sick Confederate.

It was just as the team gave the last rough jerk up the bank Long Boy took a coughing spell which ended in a rush of red.

"It was too much for him," Doctor Graham said.

"No—not—enough. You have been good to me."

When the road became smoother the Arkansas prisoner opened his eyes and looked back toward the river with its living green along the waterway, "How beautiful!" he said. "Sing about it for me—about the river where the angels walk."

"Shall we gather at the river
Where bright angels feet have trod—"

Is that it, Long Boy? "Ann Leuin asked.

"That's it. They sing it at the meetin' house over the mountain."

Doctor Graham moved by the side of the mattress and took the long, thin hand of Pick-Ax in his as Ann Leuin began to sing.

"You sing—too," he said to Doctor Graham.

The driver let the team go slow. Ann Leuin, Miss Cummins, Doctor Graham and the wounded Confederate sang the old song.

Before it was finished Long Boy had ceased to breathe and when the sun was setting they stopped long enough to bury him. The grave was shallow and hastily dug. But the white fingers of Ann Leuin as she wiped his face and smoothed back his hair, were very tender, and the blanket winding-sheet was rolled with kindly hands.

So they left him for his last long bivouac on the margin of the river.

CHAPTER VI

HOSPITAL DAYS

WHILE Ann Leuin Laury was rendering service in many hospitals, Norcrosse, in other and far away hospitals was being ministered to by those who knew only of his lesser suffering; for his heart pain at the loss of the girl he left in Mississippi was more vital and keen than any bodily pain. His first scouting experience with its contribution to a splendid victory, was his last, for the hound's teeth had driven deep. A stay of months in Libby was followed by his escape. He reached Washington covered with tree branches to afford shade and keep off flies, on the flat car of a long train of sick and wounded. Fever and blood poison were his fate. Bones were removed from his foot which was finally amputated. Most of the time he was conscious. When he was delirious he begged pitifully for somebody he called Ann Leuin.

It seemed impossible that during these long, lonesome months, not a line came to him from Ann Leuin, and try as he might he could not understand why. When his Uncle Honey visited him, Norcrosse besought his aid in trying to get in communication with his Mississippi sweetheart.

"Still in love with that little Rebel?" Uncle Honey asked.

"Still? It was not for a day nor a month nor a year—and don't call her a Rebel. The name does not suit so beautiful, so sweet a girl."

"She *was* beautiful, a sweet girl, a love of a girl. But that was before the war, my boy! War is the supreme test of love and friendship. Her father was lovable too. He swore eternal friendship—he loved me even as I loved him—*before the war!*" and the old man told the younger, with many a tight-setting of his thin lips, of the letter Judge

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Laury had written severing all friendly ties, even prohibiting the sending of the paper to his Mississippi home.

"Perhaps Judge Laury never gave her my letter," Norcrosse said with knitted brows.

"Probably not, if he got his hands on it first. But could she not have written you?"

"Perhaps she did. But where could she have addressed a letter? You were a long time away from Fredericksburg had she sent it in your care. Perhaps she wrote to you and thinks that both of us have broken friendship with her because of her father's letter."

"Perhaps, perhaps! But take my advice and forget her."

"Forget her? She is a part of every breath I draw and I want you to write to her for me."

The letter was written. Uncle Honey went back to Fredericksburg and Norcrosse, by one of those strange inconsistencies desire produces in the mind, began watching the next day for a letter from Mississippi.

It was several weeks before the letter came. It was a note from Mrs. Laury to Mr. Honeycutt. It read: "Sir: Your letter addressed to my daughter is returned herewith. She has been a long time gone as a result of the war you have waged, which has taken not only our beloved and only son in death, but has robbed us of our beloved and only daughter. Kindly address no more communications to our broken and desolated home, which is such because of your kind of misguided zeal for a Union that does not exist and would not be worth the price if it did."

"She has been a long time gone," Norcrosse repeated.

"Does it mean she is dead—*dead*!" and in his weakness and disappointment he turned his face to the wall and wept. It was after this he had the long illness during which it was several times thought he would never recover.

But he pulled back on the life side slowly and became a conscious part of hospital life.

There were many visitors who insisted on doing some-

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thing for the soldiers, but Norcrosse asked no favors. The one thing he wanted, they could not give. The girl—was she living or dead?

Among the visitors there were several, however, that Norcrosse was interested in. One of these was Clara Barton, a lady whose life was given up to making plans for the safety and aid of the sick and wounded in warfare. There came one day a big soul radiating cheer and comfort as he passed from cot to cot and ward to ward—a genial priest, Father Chiniquy was his name. Twice he came to see Norcrosse after he discovered him to be the nephew of Editor Honeycutt of the widely read *Herald*.

On one of these visits Father Chiniquy told Norcrosse, in a manner that interested the sick man as a story interests a child, how he left Canada to found a colony of his people in Illinois. "The prairies were then a vast solitude with almost impassable roads," he said. "It took me three days to go from Chicago to Bourbonnais. The prairies spread like a boundless ocean and I took a compass for a guide. I wanted to select the highest point in Illinois for my first town in order to secure the purest air and water for the new immigrants We had at first only two small log houses. With the rest of my dear immigrants, wrapped in buffalo robes with my coat for a pillow, I slept soundly on the bare floor. With marvelous rapidity forty small but neat houses were put up on the beautiful prairies. Game was abundant and every day we killed enough prairie chickens, quail, ducks, wild geese, brant and deer, to feed more people than there were in our colony. Our daily and common meals were more sumptuous than the richest ones in Canada and cost almost nothing. It was a happy day when the first place of worship was dedicated by the Bishop. Seventy-two men in the neighborhood felled the oaks of which it was made and in the steeple a bell was hung weighing two hundred and fifty pounds. Never was music sweeter than the voice of this bell sounding over the wide prairies, and never was a new colony more thankful than

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the five hundred adults who attended the consecration of the holy house."

Father Chiniquy enjoyed talking of these days, also of his temperance work. But what he seemed to enjoy most was to tell of his acquaintance with the Springfield lawyer, Abraham Lincoln, who took his case when he was in great need of wise counsel and made a speech never to be forgotten. "I love him," he said, "and my heart swells with sorrow to know how he is misunderstood. Like the Man of Galilee he walks among men—yet they know him not. God grant that he be not sacrificed as was the Son of Man before the world recognizes his soul!"

There were patients too who came into and went out of the bed just across the narrow aisle from him, whom Norcrosse found worth studying. One of these was a man destined to live in the land of the quick, in a way, after his mortal body had perished. Bill Rixse his name was. He was a Confederate prisoner who had done great service as a guerilla in the Blue Ridge country. So valuable had been his services he was the proud possessor of a letter from a Confederate general telling him that if medals were ever awarded for valor, he would be given one of gold. This letter was kept under the pillow and displayed at every opportunity.

Bill Rixse was a tall, thin man with shoulders slightly stooped. His black hair was dusted on the edges with grey and a full beard showed the same marking. He was cross-eyed in one eye and had been injured in warfare in the other. The old guerilla had many tales to tell, not only of his fighting days but of days before, when he had lived in Louisville. With Norcrosse for a listener he described old friends, old haunts and old habits until Norcrosse could see the man in other settings and came to be quite friendly with him.

Bill Rixse died one day after having entrusted his precious letter to Norcrosse to be delivered to his only brother, if he could be found. It was with the dying of Bill Rixse,

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Norcrosse became deeply interested in a new nurse who had come into the ward. A big man he was, broad of shoulder, full in the chest. His ruddy face was framed completely in an abundance of hair slightly grizzled. It was after the new nurse had spoken Norcrosse inquired his name and was told it was Whitman.

“Life! Death!” The big nurse said as he looked down on the lifeless body across the way from Norcrosse. “Praised be the fathomless universe for life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious, and for love, sweet love. But praise! Praise! Praise for the sure—entwining arms of cool, refreshing death! Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet.”

Like prophets he had read of in the Bible, so this strange nurse seemed to Norcrosse except that there was about this man an abounding fullness of life he had never associated in his mind with Biblical prophets. He gave the impression of being a brother to the dead as well as the living as he stood and spoke. Norcrosse did not know until he found on his cot one day a copy of a little book of verse called “Leaves of Grass” that the nurse and prophet was also a poet—Walt Whitman, and he was almost sorry he had made the discovery lest the man—the brother, should now be lost in the poet.

The next to occupy the cot across from Norcrosse was a blind man who was afraid of death. Many had gone out from the ward but Norcrosse had never feared death until the terror of the blind man made it seem real—a sneaking, a bloodless, cruel thing akin to rattles in the throat, clammy hands, filmed eyes, corruption and sickening stench. In his first delirium the man with sightless eyes had struggled and fought, had clutched at his throat and torn his bandages away when he thought the relentless fingers were laying hold on him.

Then it was the magical soothing of the big nurse came into power—a power that forever destroyed the fear of death for the blind man.

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To his words Norcrosse listened, fascinated away from every sense of pain or loss, as death—the horror—death the destroyer, that last enemy, was shown to be something altogether lovely and to be desired.

The words that Whitman had spoken over the body of Bill Rixse he spoke over the troubled soul of the blind man with other words added. When he had spoken of death as a kind mother whose cool, enfolding arms came as a rest, he said, "Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome? Then I chant for thee. I glorify thee above all. I bring thee a song that when thou must come, come unfaltering come from the sights of the open landscape and when the high spread skies are fitting, from life and the fields and the huge and thoughtful night the night in silence under many a star; the ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice I know. And so I turn to thee, O vast and well veil'd death, and over the tree tops I float thee a song, over the rising and sinking waves—over the myriad fields and prairies wide, over the dense packed cities all and the teeming wharves and ways, I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee, O death Come lovely and soothing death. Undulated round the world, serenely arriving—arriving, in the day, in the night, to all, to each, sooner or later, delicate death, Praise! Praise!"

In after years the words of the poet seemed to Norcrosse like delicate pink and purple flowers hung on a trellis built of oak and set deep. Or they were like the mist stuff that takes the glint of gold and rainbow tints over the mountain heads whose feet are granite.

But it was not the words, but something back of them that calmed the blind man's fear and cast a pleasant spell over Norcrosse. Simple were the words and yet subtle in suggestion beyond the art of analysis. He would sing, carol, shout praises for death! Death a soothing mother, a friend encompassing land and sea.

"O that I might see you!" the blind man exclaimed.

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"There's a way for every wish," said the big nurse bending over the cot. "See with your fingers," and he lifted the hand of the blind to his face.

When the man had gone carefully over Whitman's face with his finger tips he said to Norcrosse, "He is greater than death—he *knows*!"

It was of the nurse that Norcrosse and the blind man talked for hours and they were agreed that the soul within him must have come from some boundless universe to dwell for a time among men when the intimate and kindly hand of death would open the door that he might enter again into that from which he had come.

With the passing of the fear that had so often distorted the face of the blind man, his features took on a new expression, even his caved-in sepulchers of what had once been eyes, invited the pleased confidence of visitors who stopped for a word. One day as Norcrosse lay with a damp towel over his eyes, he heard the blind man say, "You speak so kindly, so kindly. If I could only see you sir—this way," and he held up his thin sensitive fingers.

"You would see? You have a very good way."

Norcrosse lifted a corner of the towel. A tall figure in black bent over the blind man's cot on the foot of which a silk hat rested. Norcrosse could not see the face of the visitor but he could see the fingers of the sightless man as they crossed the forehead, stopping to follow the uneven lines of the thick hair, followed the beard line around the thin cheeks across the chin and back to the forehead. Then the fingers touched the nose, dipped gently into the deep eye sockets and then went to the cheeks. Here the fingers moved slowly and the expression on the blind man's face was that of one listening intently as the deep furrows were followed in their straight lines.

The hands were lifted suddenly as the blind man cried, "You are not—O sir—*can* you be the President?"

"A good guess," the tall man said raising to full height. "I am Abraham Lincoln."

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“ God be praised! God be praised! ” And in the sightless eyes tears came.

Norcrosse had pushed the towel away and was studying the figure of the tall man when the President turned to him with the words, “ And this young man? ”

“ He won a battle for the Union,” the nurse said. “ He made one of the most daring and successful trips on record into the heart of the enemy, got certain information, sent the rockets up that decided the Union commander’s course. But he—ah, Mr. President, the hounds got him and their teeth sank deep. He was captured, sent to Libby and was one of the officers who escaped.”

“ Hound’s teeth? Indeed. So you know how hound’s teeth feel, my brave young fellow. Well you have done your part in a war which if won will forever keep hound’s teeth out of black flesh. Even the losses of war have their compensation in the satisfaction of duty well done and time will heal wounds made by hound’s teeth.”

“ Yes Mr. President, but there are wounds time can never heal and losses that can never be compensated.”

“ I wonder if there are,” the President said thoughtfully.

“ You would not ask, Mr. President, if all your hope and joy of life were in the keeping of one girl—and you lost her.”

The President’s eyes met those of Norcrosse. The expression in them the young man was never able either to define or forget.

“ You may think only weaklings are crushed by such a loss,” Norcrosse said after a moment. “ I never thought it of myself, but perhaps I am a weakling.”

“ It is only men who are strong enough to know the full measure of love who know the full measure of its loss. Did she die? ”

“ I do not know, sir.”

“ Don’t know? Then do not lose heart. Only the grave stands across the pathway of hope. Nor am I sure the grave is more than a temporary obstacle for ‘ Love is eternal ’ my

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good boy, 'Love is eternal' and a man like you never loved a woman who did not know love's value.'"

The President had put his long, strong fingers on the forehead of Norcrosse as he spoke. Whether it was the face, the voice or both, or neither, that compelled Norcrosse to a feeling of reverence he did not know. It was as if some unknown holy breath had blown over the two of them in the moment. Instinctively he caught the President's hand and would have pressed it to his lips, but the strong man grasped the hand of Norcrosse in too firm a pressure and said, "You'll be out of this after awhile—and the girl is waiting."

CHAPTER VII

AT GETTYSBURG

WHEN in 1780 General James Gettys laid out in southern Pennsylvania what he hoped might some day be a thriving town, he little knew the measure of immortality that was to gather around his name nor the manner of its coming.

In the month of May 1863 Lee and Hooker had met in battle at Chancellorsville, the Union general in command of one hundred and thirty thousand men and the Confederate leader with sixty thousand. The victory for the gallant Lee had been brilliant and decisive.

Following this victory, the Confederate Army of Virginia, largely reinforced, crossed the state line and at Gettysburg met the Federal Army of the Potomac under Meade.

It was midsummer and the world was green. Grassy fields stretched toward distant sky-lines marked here and there with trees in full leaf. Nature was at peace. The humming of bees over clover; the bleating of sheep in the meadows; the crowing of cocks in the barn-yards and the talking of men and women at the village store and on the home step, made the noises that sounded on the summer air until there came a strange and portentous rumbling akin to far thunder.

This was not the moving along uncharted ways of clouds massed in the heavens. It was the movement of massed men as their tramping feet marched in battle line. Before the mighty army marching under the Stars and Stripes had come upon the scene, concealed guns of enemy sharpshooters began their work which was, however, no more than a scratch on the skin. It was at one o'clock in the afternoon the guns of the enemy suddenly opened fire. First one great gun spoke and then as if it had been a commander ordering action, the whole artillery broke loose opening

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up their mouths to pour forth fire and thunder. The ground trembled as a palsied hand shakes. The air was filled with lead and iron. The round shot charged the ears of the fighting men whistling "Who-oo? Who-oo?" as stinging bats of Hades might whistle, while projectiles like fiends shrieked, "Which one? Which one?" as they picked their marks, and shells screamed like demons mad with glee. It was a carnival of hell—and this was but the beginning.

Until now the enemy had not been seen. At three o'clock the fire slackened and as the clouds of smoke lifted and were carried away, the coming charge was seen—the most magnificent known in military history.

Advancing across the long, level plain were three splendid battle lines with troops massed in close column by division on both flanks. They were met full in the face with as infernal an artillery fire as ever belched its burning way to destruction. The ranks of the enemy were filled. On—on—on they came with colors flying and bayonets gleaming in the sunlight. Over fences they came and over ditches keeping their lines as straight as if on parade, their blue steel flashing like a ribbon of light above their heads.

The artillery ceased. There is a hush in the awful quiet. Riders ride and give command, "Don't fire until they get to the last fence, *then let them have it.*" On, on they come until the outlines of their faces can be clearly seen and the orders of their officers can be distinctly heard as they shout "Steady, boys—! Steady!"

They reach the fence when suddenly the command "Fire!" rings on the penetrating and awful stillness, and as one man the waiting blue coats take aim at the live hearts under the grey.

"Load and fire at will!" Heavens! How the merciless hail of lead drives into the eyes and teeth and hearts and brains of the long grey line! The first line wavers—breaks! Some of the color sergeants stop and plant their standards in the ground. But it is only for a moment. Then they

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too sink to be trodden under foot of their fellows and their blood-wet standards trampled in the ground.

The line rallies—is filled—comes again! And again the driving fire! Line after line they come to deliver their one volley before being mown down like tender grass in front of a swinging scythe. Line after line forms—staggers—falls—reforms—falls—until by and by they come up smaller, thinner. They break quick and are longer getting together. Excitement runs delirium high. Men yell like demons and the words are heard—screams from the pit, “ Give it to ’em! Give it to ’em! ”

Prisoners, officers and men pour in. The wounded are dragged from under foot. The dead are heaped up.

On the Fourth of July, over the dead and moaning, over the smoking fields whose dry mouths were gorged with human blood, over tent and trench and over the Stars and Stripes flying in victory, the tears of heaven fell—fell as if by torrential weeping the sorrow of the Heart of God might be told. And in the darkness of the storm, the survivors of the straight and gleaming proud grey lines of yesterday, took their way back to Virginia, unpursued and unhindered.

Following war, its aftermath! To care for the thousands left mutilated on the battle field, there was a great inflow of doctors and nurses, of Sisters of Charity and private citizens to the little village and the tents beyond. Broken windows, the marks of bullets and cannon balls, battered and scarred stone walls, the carcasses of dead horses steaming in the sun and the uncounted graves of soldiers told of what had recently happened. To the workers coming upon the field for the first time the stench was overcoming for the heat of a torrid July wrought rapid dissolution and camphor and cologne were prime necessities for the women workers. Nor were the sounds less horrible than the odors. Groans, cries and shrieks of anguish were heard by day and night, nor was there any difference in either

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pain or prayers of friend and foe, as they lay side by side in tent and church or open field.

A perpetual procession of coffins passed to and fro and strangers looking for their dead searched every farm and under every tree.

It was to this battle field thousands turned their faces on a November day when the spot was to be dedicated as a resting place for the Union dead. Even before the day of the dedication the town was filled to overflowing and hundreds walked over the battle field which was yet strewn with fragments of clothing, knapsacks, haversacks, wrecked caissons and wagon wheels from which souvenirs were taken. Sometimes the searchers were rewarded by finding belt clasps, cartridge boxes, and once in a while a little Bible, while everywhere minnie balls could be picked up.

The excitement of the little town was increased by the expected arrival of the President who was to be accompanied by Mr. Seward. When evening came the village churches were lighted and warmed to take care of those who could find no other shelter and a band paraded the street and played national airs in front of the house where the President stayed that night.

Before it was daylight on the morning of November 19, the steady tramp of foot passengers told that the solemnities of the day were to be of no ordinary kind. As the grey of early morning cleared the crowd grew continually, coming from every direction and by every avenue of approach.

As the hour drew near for the parade to move toward the battle field, heavy guns were fired at intervals ringing out on the still air like a solemn anthem. Then came the sound of funeral marches and the first of the long line of military passed through Baltimore Street toward the cemetery.

The President was easily distinguished from all the other celebrities of the day including Cabinet Members and Governors of loyal states. The sadness of recent bereavement seemed to rest on every heart as the dirges sobbed

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that day, but the President was of them all, chief mourner, and heads were bared at first sight of his sorrow-seamed face and kindly eyes.

Edward Everett, the most popular speaker in America was to give a great oration. This in itself was enough to draw a crowd. His lecture on Washington had been given a hundred times in as many cities and had netted for the preservation of Mount Vernon nearly sixty thousand dollars. In the parade he rode in a barouche with Reverend Mr. Stockton.

It was a magnificent sight; the great procession. The long line of infantry with bayonets gleaming in the sunlight, the artillery, the distinguished guests—the great multitude and over all the Stars and Stripes flying proudly.

With the human inflow that came to the dedication of Gettysburg Cemetery, were Del Norcrosse and James Honeycutt. Norcrosse had some months before gone from his last hospital to his home where he had stayed to await the fitting of a permanent artificial foot. This foot he now wore and with no inconvenience save a slight limp which made a cane helpful.

The rough platform was undecorated save with the Stars and Stripes. As it filled, Norcrosse watched eagerly for a first sight of Abraham Lincoln, his heart glowing with a warm and tender expectancy he could not explain but which was akin to the loving devotion of the spell cast over him in the hospital by the touch of a hand and the sound of a voice. Honeycutt had never seen the President. He had not forgotten the request of Father Chiniquy nor his words about the river of sorrow that took its turbid way through the heart of the Nation's Chief. But when in Washington he had felt no special interest in the man. The homecoming of Norcrosse and his deep love for the President had created an interest now undisguised.

When the President appeared, Norcrosse who was standing where he had a fairly good view, scrutinized him closely. The dark hair that the blind man's fingers had touched was

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as carelessly brushed back now as then and the dark beard framing the thin face as sombre. The deep-set eyes—the furrowed cheeks—Norcross could see the eager, trembling fingers moving over them again, and Honeycutt too, studied the face.

But all interest was soon centred in the oration of the day and for two hours the vast gathering listened to what was described as “the most elaborate eloquence of our most accomplished orator” and the applause at its close was deafening and extended.

When the President stepped to the front and lifted his eyes, there was silence like that of a deep inbreathing. The purplish-grey mist of autumn hung over the farther edges of the battle field and burying ground where the trees stood brown and sere, and in spite of the mellow warmth of the sunshine the tang of November was in the air.

Was it the loss of the brave who had perished all about that gave to his eyes their expression of irreparable loss? To an early-day friend this expression on the President’s face would have brought another scene—the sight of a young man bowed with grief and with tears dropping between the knotted fingers held to shield his face as he sobbed, “I cannot forget! The thought of snow and rain on *her* grave fills me with indescribable grief!”

Perhaps the early-day friend was not in the company. Perhaps the thought of that lonely grave under the falling autumn leaves was not in the mind of the President. Perhaps the outgoing sympathy caught by the vast crowd, before Abraham Lincoln opened his mouth, was born of his soul for Gettysburg alone, as he said:

“Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

“Now we are engaged in a great civil war testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and dedicated can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield

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of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that the nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

“ But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men living and dead who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion: that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that the government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.”

The last words were spoken like a direct appeal and yet with the prophetic ring of predetermined surety. The vast audience was silent. The hush that had preceded the brief speech of the President seemed brooding yet and settling deeper.

After what appeared an age, there was a feeble clapping of hands—so feeble after the uproarious applause given the previous speaker, as to seem like the mockery of a foolish child.

Someone extended his hand to the President—and another. The vast assembly moved uneasily, thousands of faces yet on the tall, black figure—and yet they paused to look—and yet!

“ My God! ” Honeycutt exclaimed on a long outgoing breath. “ My God, boy! ”

“ What, Uncle Honey? ”

“ Why don't they cheer? ”

“ Why don't you? ”

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Before he had time for an answer to his question, a couple of men crowded in front of Norcrosse, pushing his cane from his hand.

As he stooped to pick it up he noticed the feet of the man in front of him took a peculiar position, immediately following which the feet of the second man assumed a like position.

Lifting himself quickly, Norcrosse noticed each man fold his arms in a like and rather peculiar way and caught what he was sure was a quartered code phrase. Then the men shook hands and one of them said close to the other, "Damn fools! Damn fools—all of them, living and dead! Don't they know the kind of government they preach carries under its guaranteed liberty the destruction such liberty makes possible? Don't they know—"

The low spoken words grew indistinct. A puzzled expression came over the face of Norcrosse. The voice was familiar. A moment later it came to him. The man was the same who had directed him to the place where assault was made on the Massachusetts Sixth in Baltimore.

CHAPTER VIII

A CHANGE OF HEART

AFTER Doctor Graham with Ann Leuin and Miss Cummins left Chattanooga, they were associated with changing groups of physicians and nurses and sometimes when moves were made before the ever advancing enemy, there was time for stories and descriptions of characters as had most impressed themselves on the different officers and attendants. On such occasions Ann Leuin always told of Pick-Ax Long Boy which she was sure she would remember to tell her grandchildren. The story Miss Cummins liked best to repeat was that of a fight between two battered and staggering convalescents, one an Irishman and the other a German. The German wore a blue coat, the Irishman a grey. Sunning on a board seat just outside the hospital their talk turned to American history and the Irishman paid glowing tribute to Washington, "For wasn't he the fawther iv his country, bedad?" he said. To the Union soldier Abraham Lincoln was greater than Washington because "Any man can be a father, but few can keep the family together when it gets into a row like this Union family is in." The name of Lincoln injected into the argument and the claims made for him, were like a match in a tinder box and the Irishman applied to the President a long string of epithets. To this volley the German called Jefferson Davis "A damn dirty traitor who should have been hanged higher than old John Brown."

"In th' name iv th' Howly Virgin, Saint Patrick and th' rist iv thim, this for your dhirty mouth," and doubling his fist the Irishman struck out.

"Gott in Himmel—!" Exclaimed the German and the next minute the two combatants were struggling on the ground pounding each other to the limit of their strength until an attendant called by their outeries rushed upon

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them. When they were brought in from their sunning, bruised and bleeding, the attendant was still cursing them for adding to the troubles of a hospital overcrowded with victims of Yankee guns and bayonets. The wish was expressed that they had been allowed to kill each other, and the hope that they would both die before morning and be buried in one grave where their warlike souls might continue the fight.

This story always ended with laughter, for the good Scotch nurse thought this the funniest of all the numerous tragedies she had ever known.

Among the men there was always discussion of Jefferson Davis, of whom there was much criticism as there would have been of any other man in his difficult position. Doctor Graham's criticism was of the Confederate President's stubborn refusal to put Robert E. Lee of Virginia in command of the Confederate forces. Doctor Graham was an ardent admirer of Lee. He knew his career from the time he left West Point, his splendid military work in the Mexican War and his general fitness for big leadership. Was it possible Mr. Davis did not know of Lee's superiority above that of any of the splendid military men of the South? Did he not know? If he did, why his persistent refusal to give his command? Was there jealousy? Or was there some covered mystery or combination of interests that kept this chieftain among military men in a subordinate position?

Then there was the discussion of Governor Brown of Georgia, who contended that under the accepted doctrine of States Rights, Georgia had a right to secede from the confederate states, and due notice was given that under certain conditions she would. An argument on this application of States Rights was of interest to Ann Leuin because of what Norcross had written on the subject when the Mayor of New York preached the same opinion.

And there was always Lincoln—the most hated name mentioned in hospital, camp, home or hall of state throughout the South. Ann Leuin remembered the talk of one

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night. It was while they were staying for a few days in an old house which had been turned into a temporary hospital. Here was a big fireplace in which pine knots burning and sending out their flickering light brought up the picture Pick-Ax had given them of Abe Lincoln studying by the fire. The mention of the President's name called for an opinion as usual.

"White trash," one of the young doctors said. "Of course we had war. God never intended that this country of ours should be ruled by white trash. So long as the South furnished gentlemen in the White House, there was no war. Think of it! Think of what we have seen, have heard; think of the suffering and homes broken up, enough responsibility to sink the soul in oblivion, and all resting on Lincoln."

"Do you think President Lincoln is responsible for it all?" It was Doctor Graham who asked. "Including the extortion going on among our own people in our own Southland; the devilish extortion of blood money? At least President Lincoln is not doing this."

"I must admit," answered Miss Cummins, "that the extortioners—those terrible heartless bloodsuckers are as bad as—well as Lincoln. Just to-day in a letter from home they tell me what provisions and clothing are selling for in Mobile. It is disgraceful. Take the Breslers. They were rich before the war. Did either of the boys put on a uniform and go to fight for their country? No—they shouted 'War! War! Down with the yellow-bellied Yankees!' They urged everybody to go to war—voted for war—worked for war. Then they stayed home."

"You know the Breslers?" Ann Leuin asked Miss Cummins.

"Yes, well. They have lived in Mobile ever since I can remember."

"I never heard you speak of them."

"I never thought they were worth speaking of."

"They—the sons did not go to war?"

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“ No—not the Breslers! ”

“ Is Thomas Jefferson Bresler one of them? ”

“ Yes, the older. You know him? ”

“ I met somebody by that name—and from Mobile.”

“ You didn’t meet much.” And after this positive declaration by Miss Cummins Ann Leuin said no more.

One of the characters none of the nurses or doctors who knew him ever forgot was Paddy O’Rourke, a Union prisoner who had not been many years away from the Emerald Isles. Paddy, in spite of bandages and ointments and prodings and lancings, was always good natured and always ready to talk.

“ How does it happen,” Miss Cummins said to him one day, “that you are on the Union side? Nearly all Irishmen are for the South. One of the finest companies Mobile sent to the war was the Emerald Guards. I was at the depot the morning the company left for Virginia. It numbered one hundred and fifteen men. They were dressed in dark green, the emblematic color of Ireland and carried a very beautiful flag presented to them by some ladies. It was a Confederate flag on one side, in the centre of which was a full length figure of Washington; on the other side was the harp encircled with a wreath of shamrocks and the words ‘Erin-go-Bragh.’ Below that again was the Irish war-cry ‘Faugh-a-ballagh’ which means, as you know, ‘Clear the way.’ All the fire companies in the city escorted them to the train and a fine band played—they were going to fight for the South, Paddy.”

“ Indade? And it’s the truth you’re spaking? Well, we marched too, so we did. Our flag was alike on both sides and all over, and our fighting clothes were blue, not green.”

Stoutly maintaining that blue was as good a color for fighting clothes as green and that the flag his company carried couldn’t be beaten by even the flag of Ireland, Paddy O’Rourke remained loyal to the Union until he heard of the Pope’s letter, published in all the leading papers of the United States, North and South.

THE SOUL OF ABE LINCOLN

Often Doctor Graham, Ann Leuin and Miss Cummins had expressed the hope that the South would receive recognition by European countries, such recognition being almost a vital necessity. When, therefore, the Pope's letter was read in which he recognized Jefferson Davis as President of the new Confederacy, there was great rejoicing in the South and no one was happier than Miss Cummins. "Thank God the Pope has been brave enough to recognize the Confederacy," she said. "He has been friendly all along and in his former letter to our President called him his 'dear son.' That, however was the fatherly spiritual recognition inspired by his interest in all mankind. He now recognizes us. France will be next and Austria and Spain and Italy—Ireland and England will come in, too. It is the beginning of final victory."

It was this conversation Paddy O'Rourke listened to with wide open eyes and a broad smile. And when opportunity came he too talked and they were listeners as he said, "It's a son iv me fawther am I and him one iv th' faithful who followed Captain Rock whin they put th' torch to Sleive-moran. 'What is Slieve-moran, and who was Captain Rock,' you ask? Musha! Honey! If you had gone turf hunting beyond th' village of Ballynamanagh and fallen into half th' bog-holes between Clough's Acre and St. Kevin's well I crawled out iv, you'd know th' way to Sleive-moran—and Captain Rock—he knew th' way too—he did!

"I courted Judy Machree, and a better gurl niver shadowed th' green she walked over. Heart and flesh fail me whin I think iv th' cowld prates th' kind sowl set for me and th' glow iv th' turf whin th' bowl was full iv buttermilk.

"One night she says to me, 'Paddy', says she, 'th' moon's up—och th' purty crater. Let's ramble a bit.' And by Howly Mary, it's sworn I was before th' moon set, to be hers foriver.

"And niver a better lass cut turf. Whin th' rint was niver there she says to me 'Troth and it ain't for th' likes

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iv you to worry. Be aisy. I'll say an ave or a rosary! Sorrow a bit if th' beggarly spalpeen wants his rint.' And whin th' gasson came on his baste to squeeze blood from a pratie, thin would Judy Machree get him in, give him a sprinkling iv moonshine—mountain dew—tickle his ears with long stories and say with a smile like that iv th' Howly Virgin 'Bad luck to your blarney if you don't thrun th' baste and begone from th' place iv Paddy O'Rourke.' And would he go? Arrah! Shure! And whin he got back, it's gone he would find us. Och hone! She died, she did. Shure and it was sich a wake as Ballynamanagh will kape in mind till th' judgment day, we had for Judy Machree—and her all dead. And thin I lift ould Ireland—and her all dead and buried.

“And whin I got here, bedad, if they're wasn't more fighting on hand, and I spit on me hands and I says—Paddy O'Rourke, 'Gimme a wack at th' dhirty spalpeens.' But they got me on th' wrong side. In ould Ireland me fawther niver got on th' wrong side, but th' family praste was far away whin I got into th' fight here and for this I got on th' wrong side. Now I know the right side. Burn up the blue. Get me a green coat and whin I get back into th' fight I'll bring down two blue coats for ivery grey I sint to th' dust before I knew which was th' right side. Get me the green—or grey and th' curse iv all th' howly saints on th' blue.”

After the Irishman had experienced his change of heart he recovered rapidly and Doctor Graham, Miss Cummins and Ann Leuin had the pleasure of bidding him God-speed as he went away to the fighting line in a good grey uniform.

CHAPTER IX

604 H STREET, N.W.

FROM Gettysburg Norcross went back to Fredericksburg where the Stars and Stripes was again flying and James Honeycutt was again publishing the *Herald*. Here he was advised by his physician to stay until he had regained his normal weight and strength.

For a time Gettysburg and connected incidents furnished conversation topics of no slow movement for the editor and his nephew.

"What I want to know," declared Honeycutt, "is why Meade let Lee walk away. He was within easy grasp. If Meade had closed in on Lee, this with other Union successes would have ended the war. Now it is likely to be prolonged indefinitely. *What*, I ask, was Meade's object?"

"I have no answer to your question, Perhaps time will uncover a mystery."

"If I were young like you and could not fight with a gun, which you can no more do, I would get into the Secret Service and run this conspiracy order down. Everywhere its work is evident but its hand moves in the dark. Look at the uprising in New York called 'draft riots.' Was that a draft riot? Some funny things in connection with it boy! Well on toward two million dollars' worth of property destroyed and a thousand lives lost and the mob might have been on the war-path yet had not the Archbishop of New York given command that the killing and burning cease."

"A wonderful power for one man to possess and a God's blessing that someone could stop the destruction."

"Yes—a God's blessing that somebody could. But did you ever hear the old saying, 'An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure?' This, however, is not the point. The point is this; calling it a 'draft riot' the con-

spiracy organization did its work. Those fires—did you notice with what clock-like regularity they broke out? Who is so credulous as to think it just happened so? Somebody planned it, fire—murder—the whole thing. It was no more the natural uprising of a body of enraged men than its dying down was natural.”

“What I saw happen to the Massachusetts Sixth in Baltimore lends color to your belief that the New York uprising was planned by the same school of plotters.”

“To be sure! To be sure! And for further proof look at Kansas—bleeding Kansas! Have you noticed any peculiarities in the way blood-shed and destruction seem to happen out there?”

“For example?”

“I was talking yesterday with a man from there. From what he told me I will give you three facts. First, certain factions are always in possession of arms and ammunition, much of it having been the property of the Government. Who gets these arms and this ammunition? How is it done? Second, when a new settlement is made by Southern people, they are immediately set upon by a band of bullies and terrorized. These bullies and lawless men are known to go from one place to another for this very purpose. Third, when a colony of Southerners has been attacked and broken up, news is sent out that Union sympathizers did it, and the press prints this kind of thing. A subsidized press—boy, a bought or otherwise controlled press. Not all of it, to be sure.”

“No—there’s the *Herald* left,” and Norcrosse laughed.

“There are others—many of them. But watch the press—the hidden hand moves through the press—boy.”

“You have established your contention, Uncle Honey. There is a conspiracy and a treason order. But let us talk about the great conspiracy of silence that shrouds Ann Leuin Laury—my promised bride. The conspiracy that would rob me of her!”

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“ Ann Leuin Laury. I thought you gathered from her mother’s letter that she is dead.”

“ The letter did not clearly say so—and I was too near dead at the time to hope. Just now I feel like going to Mississippi myself.”

“ How are you going to do it? ”

“ How? Why just go.”

“ In Mississippi they have a Vigilance Committee to handle suspects. I met a fellow last week who barely escaped with his neck. He was a Canadian who had a nice little carriage business below Natchez. But from a sister in Ohio he received letters. Because of this he was suspected and threatened. He gave satisfactory evidence that he was the loyal subject of Her Majesty, Queen Victoria and for a time escaped. Later it was decided that this too was part of the ruse of a clever spy. They prepared the rope. He fled. My advice would be, don’t try Mississippi for a while yet.”

“ But there should be some way to find out. I have written and written. I shall write again.”

“ Grant took Vicksburg in July. From accounts there was something of an exodus of residents about that time. It is likely the Laurys moved. My advice, boy, would be to nurse your love if you can’t get over it, until things cool down. If she’s living, Bresler will never get her—the cur!”

“ Amen! ” answered Norcrosse.

“ What I’d do if I were you, as I have said before, would be to get on the trail of this damned treason order. The man who can uncover it is greater than he who takes a battle.”

It took no urging on the part of Uncle Honey to help Norcrosse decide his next move. His interest had been more keenly whetted by the Gettysburg incident than he had let his Uncle know and his plan of action when he should reach Washington was determined.

For a short time he expected to hang around the hotel,

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visit the Capitol, walk the streets, say little; meantime keeping his eyes and ears open.

It was the second day in Washington. As he walked he saw a man who looked familiar enter a saloon. He followed and discovered the man to be "John," who now wore a small and cleanly trimmed goatee. Outside Norcrosse waited, and when "John" came out he followed him. After going a few blocks, "John" was joined by a young man with a smooth face, a tiny brush on his upper lip and a placid and pious countenance. The two talked intimately until they turned into a plain red brick house on H Street, N.W., numbered 604.

The next day Norcrosse took a stroll by the house. As he walked leisurely on the opposite side of the street, a two-horse buggy drove up. "John," who was driving, went into the house to reappear almost immediately carrying a good-sized trunk which he roped on the back of the buggy, the young man with the brush-lip assisting him. Almost before the trunk had been made secure, a woman came out, wearing over her bonnet a short veil called a "mask."

Evidently they were going to the railway station and as Norcrosse had nothing else to do he went that way. They had not arrived when he got there but soon came in. When the veiled lady stood to purchase a ticket, Norcrosse stood beside her and as she lifted her veil, he saw the pocket-book-mouth. Her ticket was to Louisville. Norcrosse remembered that one of the scraps she had dropped in the Baltimore restaurant had an item of quinine marked on it. Was she taking contraband South?

Again Norcrosse took a walk and stopped near 604 H Street, N.W. This time he saw three men enter the house. "John," the young man of placid and pious countenance, and a strikingly handsome young fellow with raven-black hair. When they came out he followed them at a distance. He was somewhat disappointed to find them going to St. Aloysius and he only stayed inside long enough to recognize the handsome dark man as John Wilkes Booth, a well-known

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and greatly admired young Shakesperean actor, and to note the religious sincerity with which he took the sacrament as Mass was sung.

Outside he waited. When they left the church the three turned to the city, went into a saloon, took a drink, came out and soon separated. Norcrosse could follow but one. He chose the placid-faced young man who went directly to the Federal department. It was but a few days later this man's name was known to Norcrosse as Weischmann. He held a clerical position of trust with the Government. The people who lived at 604 H Street, N.W. were named Surratt.

Several other times Norcrosse watched the house, but the more he watched the more of a puzzle-house it became to him. The lady with the pocketbook-mouth did not return. Sometimes John Surratt would be gone for several days. Weischmann was there daily. There were other occupants of the house—Mrs. Mary Surratt, the mother, Anna, a daughter, some young lady relatives or friends or boarders—he knew not which. There were also visitors, three or four persons dressed as priests, three or four dressed as day laborers, but whether the priests were priests, or the laborers such as they seemed, he had as yet no means of knowing. Perhaps the identity of them all was veiled in borrowed clothing as the face of the lady was veiled by the mask.

When Norcrosse finally went to the Secret Service office, 604 H Street, N.W., was under suspicion in his mind though he had little evidence. His application was made to General Baker direct. Briefly he told his service story in which the chief detective seemed much interested. He then told of the people he had run across whose headquarters seemed to be 604 H Street, N.W.

“There's some kind of plotting going on I believe. Does this mean anything?” and Norcrosse took from his pocketbook a bit of paper which he handed General Baker.

Baker looked at it closely, went to a locked drawer and took out several cards, fitting the strip he held in his hand

against the marking on first one and then another. Coming to a sudden stop he called his assistant.

"Where did you get this, young man?" he asked in a somewhat excited manner after whispered words with the man he had called.

"It was dropped by one of the persons I have just told you of—dropped in a Baltimore restaurant."

"My God! I wish we could find out who the traitor is that furnishes this information! Some of these damnable Sons of Liberty! If you knew something of *this* secret order you would be a valuable man."

"I never heard of it, sir. Is it anything like the K.G.C.?"

"The K.G.C.?" Baker exclaimed. "What do you know of it?"

"Nothing much except that it exists, that it is a secret military organization presumably with an ancient history and working night and day for the disruption of the Union."

"Well you say it comes from some more ancient order, this so-called Knights of the Golden Circle, for since we have run upon it, its name has been changed to the Circle of Honor, Order of American Knights, and now the Sons of Liberty."

"Ah then, the two are the same?"

"All one and everywhere at work. Desertions are terrible—Irish are leaving the Union by the thousand. Thompson and his crew operate in Canada with a standing bank deposit of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars to be used in inciting riots, in burning, in murder! Young man, you have done valiant service in other branches. If you could get on the trail of this infamous Sons of Liberty, put some real evidence into our hands, your achievement would be second to no deed of valor on the battle-field."

"Will you give me a chance, sir?"

"Yes. You say you have not taken even the first degree?"

"I know nothing of any degrees."

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“ There are more than one. Several of our men have it, but none have gone farther. The first degree is the ‘Vestibule’ degree. It won’t take long for you to get it. The order is evidently so arranged that one taking the Vestibule or Neophite degree knows nothing of the real intention of the order further than the instructions in that degree. A Neophite meeting a fellow Neophite stands erect on both feet, placing the heel of the right foot in the hollow of the left and with—”

“ Stop! ” said Norcrosse excitedly. “ Pardon me—but that’s the way one of my suspects stood! Pardon me, and go on.”

“ Good! The right hand goes under the left arm folding the arms and placing the forefinger of the left hand over the right arm. This way,” and General Baker demonstrated.

“ There is a pass-word. It is ‘Cal-houn’ said backward in syllables, first one man and then the other repeating a syllable. Then one says ‘Give me liberty,’ the other, ‘Give me death.’ There is also a distress signal. We will give it all to you praying you may be able to use it *to get more*.”

“ I believe, sir, I can render you valuable service. May I think the matter over and call again tomorrow? ”

“ Yes—make your plans and come again. Your name is—Norcrosse.”

“ Norcrosse—Del Norcrosse.”

“ Del Norcrosse. Wait a minute,” and from a file General Baker took a small white envelope which had been torn open, which he handed to Norcrosse saying, “Know anything about this? ”

The writing on the face of the envelope set the heart of Del Norcrosse jumping, for it was the writing of Ann Leuin Laury. Inside the opened envelope was written in strange letters, “ Found on the body of the bugler of the Ohio Tenth in a small Bible. Code message. Meaning unknown.”

“ Do I know anything about this, sir? One like it was my good-luck message to be carried always. I had it

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when the guerillas got me. It was taken to Richmond as a prize. May I have this, sir—for luck?”

There was considerable of a plea in the voice of Norcrosse. Baker laughed as he said, “By all means take it for luck—and may big luck attend you.”

“It will, sir—it will!”

Del Norcrosse left the Secret Service entirely oblivious to plots and plotters, fame and glory—to everything except the card in his hand. He did not know when she had written it nor could he imagine how it came into possession of a Union soldier. All he was certain of was that Ann Leuin had penned the words—sent the message. For the time, this was enough.

CHAPTER X

BILL RIXSE

SHORTLY before the time appointed for Norcrosse to report to General Baker the next morning, a middle-aged stranger walked into the Secret Service headquarters and asked for Mr. Baker.

The man was thin, slightly bent and walked with a cane. His dark hair and beard were tinged with grey. He wore spectacles, the glasses of which were smoked.

Presented to General Baker he said, "I have come to see you, sir, about getting employment in this branch of service. I have been shot and hanged and cut and killed in general until I am no longer fit for any other service. Can I get work here?"

General Baker looked at the man. "I do not know you. Who are you? Have you any recommendations—any credentials?"

"Recommendations—the best in the world. Has anything better than this come to your notice?" and he handed General Baker a letter which was unfolded and read.

When the eyes of the Secret Service Chief had scanned the page they lifted in an intense gaze of questioning. "Are you Bill Rixse?"

"Bill Rixse? I answer to that name, sir," and the elderly man's face glowed with an expression of satisfaction.

"Bill Rixse—if you *are* Bill Rixse you're as crazy a fool as ever drew breath or you'd know better than to come here, the spider-web for flies—handcuffs, prison bars and hemp collars for such illustrious traitors to the Union as you would make yourself," and General Baker closed the door, the lock of which clicked. "Now if you have anything to say, say it. What are you doing here, Bill Rixse?"

"I came to take a position with your service, sir. I am on the trail of the Knights of the Golden Circle, alias 'Circle of Honor,' 'Mutual Protection Society,' 'Knights of the

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Mighty Host,' 'Order of American Knights,' and at present 'Sons of Liberty.' I see you do not recognize me, sir, as Bill Rixse. Would you know me by another name? "

"The devil! Are you—you're not Norcrosse are you? "

"I was yesterday."

General Baker stared a minute. Then he laughed heartily. "I thought there was something familiar about you," and extending his hand he said, "You're all right, Bill Rixse."

Then he looked at the letter. "But this—is this genuine?"

"It is, sir."

"Where is Bill Rixse—the original? "

"Being a Union man, I could not with charity say more than that he is dead, sir."

"Dead. Bill Rixse is dead?" and he studied Norcrosse.

"Dead and safely buried. He died across the hospital ward from me. Before his death he told me much of his life. He had lived in Louisville and some of his haunts he described and talked so much about I could go to them in the dark. He went to the Blue Ridge, in with the guerillas, and did such valiant service catching Union men he was recognized by the letter which was his dearest treasure. His wife is dead. He had a brother, but had no idea whether living or dead; had not heard from him for a year. He entrusted this letter to me as his legacy to this lost brother. I believe it can be made to serve a better use than to stimulate family pride."

"What do you propose to do, Bill Rixse? "

"Get acquainted with some of the parties who haunt 604 H Street, N.W. and discover what they are doing. There's something brewing under that roof I am satisfied."

"Did you tell me yesterday that one of these men occupies a position of trust in a Government office? "

"I did, sir."

"You think you will be able to connect him in any way with the fragment of code you picked up in Baltimore?"

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“ I do not know. A personal acquaintance with these men may uncover evidential matter of value.”

“ You are right, it may—Bill Rixse.”

“ You will not see me here again. Furnish me a couple of safe men for a blind trail and I think, sir, I can play my part well. Dead men tell no tales.”

It was at the inaugural ceremonies, after President Lincoln's second election, Norcross met John Surratt. Inauguration day came in rainy and the streets were deep with mud, even on Pennsylvania Avenue down which the parade was to make its way. Washington was disfigured with ugly war stains and four years of blood-letting and suffering had left its impress also on the minds and hearts of the people. So there were mutterings and curses in the air as the crowd gathered to witness the President take the oath of office for the second time.

On the morning of March 4th Bill Rixse found himself near 604 H Street, N.W. where he remained until John Surratt left his home, seemingly in a hurry.

Bill Rixse followed him to Ford's Theatre, where he had to wait in a near-by livery stable for him over an hour. At the end of the long wait, the handsome actor, Booth, came into the livery stable, had some conversation about a horse, went out and joined John Surratt and the two of them took their way toward the Capitol.

The crowd was already large, and Bill Rixse found it hard to keep on the track of the two men but easy to pass unobserved. When John Surratt and Booth finally located themselves it was early enough to get standing room where they would have a good view of the President. Bill Rixse worked in close behind them.

President Lincoln stood before the throng in the sombre grey of a wet and dreary world. If there had been a symbolic burden-bearer for this sorrowing world, this would have been the man. The lines on his face were chiselled a little deeper and his dark eyes seemed to have withdrawn yet a little farther from the world of men and to see a little

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farther into the realm of hearts and souls than when he stood in the same place four years before.

But, as if prophetic of the peace for which the heart of the whole people yearned, as the President stood before them, the clouds parted, the heavens opened, a shaft of sunlight fell across the man and illumined the words he was speaking like a benediction—"With malice toward none—with charity for all." The incident was tremendously effective. But as the words were spoken Bill Rixse muttered close to the ear of John Surratt, "The damn hypocrite!"

John Surratt looked around quickly—inquiringly.

"Yes—I said it—I mean it—and if you want to know who I am I'll tell you. I'm Bill Rixse and I don't care if you're the biggest Yankee out of hell."

A broad smile lit Surratt's thin face as he said, "shake."

As the hands of the two clasped Bill Rixse gave the grip of the Vestibule degree, Knights of the Golden Circle, which was warmly responded to. The divided word was whispered. Booth was given the sign—and was introduced to Bill Rixse and the three left the crowd and made their way to room 82 at the National Hotel where they were to be the guests of Booth at a little drinking party. At the hotel they were joined by Weischmann.

It was over the glasses they got better acquainted. Booth was brilliant, effervescing with life, graceful—an actor; "O nation miserable with an untitled tyrant, bloody sceptred!" he shouted. "When shalt thou see the wholesome days again?" and in answer to a note of warning from the watchful and low-voiced Weischmann, he struck an attitude and again shouted, "I dare damnation! To this point I stand!"

Bill Rixse could not quote Shakespeare nor act a part. But he carried a letter that gave him importance and this letter he produced, his face showing his pride in it.

"Are you acquainted in Louisville?" John Surratt asked after reading the missive.

"Me? Bill Rixse? We Rixses all came from Tennessee

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and Kentucky. I know Louisville and the surrounding country in the dark."

"When are you going down to Louisville?"

This question Bill Rixse studied a moment.

"I ask because I'm going down that way myself next week and there's a man higher up I want you to meet."

"Good! Let me know when you are going and I'll be ready."

While John Surratt and Bill Rixse were talking of their trip to Louisville, Booth and Weischmann were in close conversation across the table. Bill Rixse could hear Booth but Weischmann's voice was low—musical—soft—and no word of what he said could be understood.

Bill Rixse's first visit with his new acquaintances was one of pleasure. The actor, with his Shakespearean quotations and acting, was a continual source of surprise and pleasure. Surratt was in touch with active forces not apparent and Weischmann, the trusted Government clerk, whatever else he was, was the still water that runs deep.

What would his visit to Louisville bring forth?

Twice before, Bill Rixse had seen the gentleman higher up John Surratt introduced him to in Louisville. Once in the restaurant at Baltimore when he had directed him to the spot where the assault was made on the Massachusetts Sixth. The second time was at Gettysburg when attention was drawn to him by the peculiar foot position he assumed for a moment. The gentleman's name was Doctor Bowles. He was one of the district managers of the Sons of Liberty—a patriotic order. He was in desperate need of a loyal man, a tried man and a man acquainted with Louisville and the country in Kentucky and Tennessee, for secretary of the order in Louisville.

The gold medal letter was produced. Doctor Bowles read it with interest and said, as he rubbed his hands together, "Good! Good!" When he handed the letter back to Bill Rixse he said, "Where is your brother now?"

"Do you know my brother?"

"I did not know him—only saw him around town."

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" Yes, he hung around. There used to be a saloon at the northwest corner of Eight street. He was there some. It's a long time since I heard a word from him. He went to war. I suppose he is dead—as I came near being."

" You know the country around here? "

" Guess I ought to."

Doctor Bowles looked Bill Rixse over and to John Surratt said, " Harrison, a good find. Thanks."

Having taken only the Vestibule degree Bill Rixse felt some concern lest he should be asked for the grip, signs, counter signs and pass words of the higher degrees including the Supreme fourth. But the fate that had in a measure befriended him before, was with him. Closeted in Doctor Bowles' inner office for instructions in his new work, he was handed certain printed matter from which, during a short absence of Doctor Bowles from the inner office, he learned much. It was possession of the unwritten work, however, he knew was a vital necessity.

Making the best possible use of the information he had obtained and keeping his ears and eyes open, he was given a preliminary commission and put in possession of plans and information that would have caused him to gasp with astonishment and horror had he been other than the good and true Son of Liberty, Bill Rixse.

It was in Indianapolis and from the Grand Commander himself Bill Rixse got his Fourth degree work. With his gold-medal letter and recommendation from Doctor Bowles, he was not required to give the pass word no more than were others of the inner circle when they met in private council, and having come thus far, his loyalty to the cause of treason was fully established.

Bill Rixse's first meeting with Grand Commander Dodge was not in any lodge hall or business office. When he and Doctor Bowles reported at the office of Grand Commander Dodge on Sunday morning, they were informed that he was at "church."

Taking the tip, Doctor Bowles accompanied by Bill Rixse, took a blind path and also went to "church."

CHAPTER XI

GREEK FIRE

THE "church" which Grand Commander Dodge was attending, Bill Rixse found to be in the basement of an old warehouse.

Here, under direction of a Dutch chemist named Booking, experiments were being made with what they called Greek Fire.

This aid to treason was composed of bi-sulphate of carbon and phosphorous and was to be used in the destruction of United States property. A great many wharves and docks on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers had already been destroyed, and the formula was being perfected. There were a number of Fourth degree members present and after some experimenting a very small portion of the liquid was poured on a paper which, upon being exposed to the air, immediately ignited.* Another sample was then burned under water and it was demonstrated that neither vinegar nor molasses would extinguish the flame.

Some of this fluid was put up in thin glass bottles to be thrown as occasion demanded, with enough force to break the glass, when flames followed. A more destructive method of use was to put it in hollow shells from guns which, bursting, threw flame. Again a string attachment was used with hand grenades which were swung and thrown a safe distance from the body like a sling.

But the most popular method of using Greek Fire was to put it in a small satchel or portmanteau in which was an alarm clock with the bell removed. This, when set to any given time, would spring the lock of a gun the hammer of which struck and exploded a cap filled with powder.

* For a full account of the making and use of Greek Fire see *Treason History* by Felix G. Stedger.

GREEK FIRE

By this explosion a bunch of tow saturated with turpentine was ignited. This innocent-appearing but vicious valise could be carried by anyone into a hotel room, aboard a steamer or into a business house. The clock wound up with alarm attachment and could be set off any future time of from ten minutes to ten hours.

With the knowledge of this Greek Fire, its workings and the Fourth degree brains and purpose back of it, there was no difficulty in understanding the cause of the great conflagrations in the New York riots nor accounting for the peculiar fact that the fire broke out with the clock-like regularity that had been noted by Editor Honeycutt. Nor was it hard to detect the mystery surrounding the burning of so much Government property.

All this and much more Bill Rixse learned about Greek Fire the Sunday morning of his first visit to Grand Commander Dodge in Indianapolis.

Sunday night a council was held in another basement fitted up for secret instructions. Bill Rixse was invited to this council. With others who took no part he sat in the rear. At this meeting the obligation was administered to several new members who had come up from the Vestibule ranks. Grips were given and pass words spoken, and thus Bill Rixse came into possession of the unwritten work—the Great Secret. Printed copies of the Constitution and Ritual were given to officers and the printed address of Grand Commander Dodge given out.

This Constitution Bill Rixse learned was remade from the original Knights of the Golden Circle, which in turn came from an older order. What this order was he did not learn, but he found it true as he had been told by the Secret Service that the organization had many times changed its name.

He also found it to be a military organization, well trained and thoroughly equipped with arms and ammunition.

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Doctor Bowles talked freely at the meeting. His plan was to concentrate the forces of Indiana and Kentucky in Kentucky, making this state the battle-ground for a conflict. The forces of Illinois were to proceed to St. Louis and coöperate with those of Missouri. Illinois could furnish 50,000 men; Missouri 30,000. The Confederate General, Sterling Price, would invade Missouri with 20,000 troops and with this 100,000 the Sons of Liberty expected to permanently hold Missouri, while the forces of Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky with such troops as the Confederates might send into Kentucky under Buckner or Breckinridge, could easily hold Kentucky. One loyal son of the Order had a whole regiment of troops in Indiana. Rixse found it a great game. But it was no longer a mystery where and how United States arms and ammunition were continually being found in possession of mobs and deserters.

There were a number of reports brought before the Council of the Fourth degree. One of the most interesting of these was from a member who gave a considerable history of the great draft riots in New York, which were only ended by the return of the State Militia from Gettysburg. This member was the leader of a posse of rioters that tried to force its way into the headquarters and offices of the Commanding General of the United States troops in New York City for the purpose of capturing the General and forcing him under threats of death to call off the troops that were engaged in suppressing the riot. Just as he reached the General's door he was himself made a prisoner.

The climax of the Council of the Fourth degree members was a discussion of the oath. Bill Rixse could hardly believe his own ears when he heard this—an oath to destroy, by the steel of the blade, the poison cup, the leaden bullet, the strangulation cord, or in any other manner where such action was necessary for the preservation of the safety and secrecy of the Order. An oath swearing the body of a traitor to be sawn asunder and its vitals scattered to the four quar-

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ters of the earth. And that this oath, blood sealed, was not merely one of form he knew as he listened to the discussion of certain men marked for a sure and mysterious taking-off.

It was as a full-fledged Fourth degree member of the Order, Bill Rixse returned to his post of duty in Louisville.

During the early days of the war, hospital arrangements were pitiful and inadequate, and great suffering was endured by army patients who were housed in any old building that might be secured. There was no such thing in the army as a General Hospital. There was no trained medical staff. There were no instructed nurses nor diet kitchens nor medical supplies nor means of transportation for the sick and wounded.

Facing this condition certain women—Florence Nightingale, Dorothy Dix, Clara Barton and others, planned relief—and the Sanitary Commission came into existence.

It was one noon while he was yet new in the work a man came into Bill Rixse's office and asked for a confidential talk. He proved himself a Fourth degree member. The door was closed and locked. The visitor told Bill Rixse in strictest confidence that there had been turned over to him that morning, as Disbursement Officer of the United States Sanitary Commission, \$20,000 in gold to be distributed as instructed. He had made arrangements through friends to send Confederate General John C. Breckinridge, then in Eastern Kentucky, \$5,000 of the gold. In constant correspondence with Breckinridge, through men who passed freely from Louisville into Eastern Kentucky, he was able to send the gold without risk and he had a clever plan for fixing the books and accounting for the money. He wanted Bill Rixse to furnish him an address which was gladly done. Later he came in to bring the sad news that the Federal Government had, in some mysterious way, which neither the disbursing agent nor Bill Rixse could figure out, discovered the plan and nipped it in the bud.

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Then came a disastrous fire in Louisville which burned a great amount of Government supplies stored in large buildings. As Bill Rixse came to know, the fire was started by a member of the Sons of Liberty, who obtained entrance to the Government building through a store and across roofs. Prying up a hatchway he got into the building, set his Greek Fire, left as he went in, and one hour later the fire broke out—a mysterious fire, the papers said.

Bill Rixse made a number of visits to Indianapolis, sometimes with Doctor Bowles, sometimes alone, his destination the office of Grand Commander Dodge. These visits were always fresh revelations of the power, strength, cunning and purpose of the Order as well as its plans.

One of the most important schemes on hand was being well pushed by Dodge and his confederates—a scheme unsurpassed in magnitude by anything Bill Rixse had as yet heard.

Confined in Camp Morton just outside Indianapolis, were six thousand enemy prisoners. Many of these prisoners were members of the Order, and Sons of Liberty on the outside were at work on those prisoners on the inside not yet members. The plan was to liberate this six thousand and the details were well worked out.

A big mass-meeting was planned to be held near Camp Morton. Every available member of the Order was to attend and come armed, his arms to be concealed in the bottom of his vehicle under straw for the horses or any other safe place. In the evening, at a given order, the members were to fall in line for immediate action. It was thought by Grand Commander Dodge that this would be quickly and quietly done before the alarm was given, as the prisoners were fully informed they might be released, take the arms provided for them, march to the arsenals and take possession of the entire store of arms.

At Louisville on the same day a grand barbecue was to

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be given just outside the city. Members of the Order were notified to attend the same as they had been in Indiana. When as many law-abiding citizens as could be collected at this barbecue were at the height of their enjoyment, the City of Louisville was to be set on fire in from ten to twenty places, by Greek Fire again. While the attention of everybody was turned to these fires the armed members of the Order were to seize their arms, take possession of the city and hold it until the Indianapolis forces should arrive, when the combined forces could easily drive the Federals from Louisville.

All this was well planned and Bill Rixse got it in detail as he visited the Grand Commander in his secret office.

But there was another secret office in Indianapolis Bill Rixse went into a few times and yet was never seen in, and this other secret office was not in accord with the plans of the Sons of Liberty and frustrated their plans in a most mysterious and yet effective manner.

When Bill Rixse visited Grand Commander Dodge he walked boldly up the front stairs, for Dodge was an eminent and respectable lawyer and Rixse was an equally respectable business man from Louisville.

But when Bill Rixse called at the other office he avoided front entrances. His way was across a lot piled with cast-off rusting farm machinery. At one side of this lot, when Bill Rixse chanced to be about, there was always another man, accomplished in two ways. He was never without an excuse for being where he was, and he knew how to whistle "In the Christian's Home in Glory" which had a meaning pertaining to strictly private mundane affairs. Safely across the back-yard dump heaps, Bill Rixse entered a battered old door to an empty warehouse basement. On the upper front floor of this building, where the windows were clean and the paint on the signboards fairly fresh, there was an office occupied by a gentleman known to the

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Secret Service of the Federal Government as Colonel Carrington. The sign-board hanging over his window read:

GET A HOMESTEAD
ORIGINAL ENTRIES
CAREFULLY MADE

Somewhere between the place where Bill Rixse disappeared and Colonel Carrington entered this building they met for a few brief minutes.

Then Bill Rixse cautiously left the dingy building through the battered door, took his way between the discarded farm machinery to the tune of the "Christian's Home in Glory" and went about his way.

CHAPTER XII

AN ADVENTURE

It was some months before Norcrosse began his adventures as Bill Rixse, that Ann Leuin had the most exciting adventure of her war-time life.

At every stopping place as Doctor Graham and his nurse moved southward before the advancing Union army, there were incidents and happenings to remember. But it was Marietta that Ann Leuin knew she would hold longest in vivid remembrance.

At many places there had been church bells and to Ann Leuin their ringing was pleasant, taking her back to the plantation where, across the fields and over the groves and gardens the bell in the slave's little meeting house had made Sunday morning music.

But at Marietta all was silent. The bells had been used to make cannon and it was at Marietta Ann Leuin learned that her good friend Doctor Graham, whose untiring and gentle ministry to the suffering had been brighter and kinder and lovelier than any service she had ever known, was himself a victim of the dread disease that had left so many empty cots in every hospital.

In Ann Leuin's mind this knowledge of Doctor Graham's condition, coming as it did at Marietta, was always associated with the silence of glad bells; bells that had once spoken with holy tongues, and their silence seemed prophetic of a silence to come with the passing of a voice she had learned to love.

Owing to the movements of the Federal army, hospital headquarters of Marietta were temporary and Doctor Graham with several members of his staff, including his chief nurse, Miss Cummins, and Ann Leuin, occupied a roomy old home which had been given for hospital use.

The evening after Ann Leuin had learned of the probable

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fate of Doctor Graham, as she studied his face in the light of a low-burning fire, she could not believe it might soon be gone forever. He did not look sick—his face was thinner than when she first saw it—but could his long hours of unselfish service have done less than leave its sign of wear? He was smiling, even happy—and making plans and discussing details as if all of life were his. The burden lifted from Ann Leuin's heart. It was a mistake—at least an exaggeration! It must be. Her foreboding dropped away and when Doctor Graham started humming a popular song she joined with him, their voices blending and the melody giving pleasure to those who heard.

But when after this song Doctor Graham began softly singing "You'll Remember Me," Ann Leuin's heart seemed to be caught suddenly in a grip of pain that stopped her breath for the moment and then brought it back in surges that ran through her being like a flood.

"There may some recollection be
Of days that have as happy been
And you'll remember me—"

It was Gus singing again—Gus beside the piano at the birthday party. Gus—her darling brother whose voice had been a long time silenced forever and whose proud and manly young form had gone back to the decay of all things. It was Del Norcrosse—how clearly his rich voice sounded—it was all the sorrow of the world—it was the passing of all cherished hopes and dearest loves.

As the flood surged over her heart Ann Leuin knew she would soon be sobbing like a baby if she sat still. With an excuse of having forgotten a duty, she hurriedly left the fireside and in the shadows that hung over a dying soldier's cot she wiped her eyes and got control of herself.

But the little Georgia town of Marietta was not to be forever remembered because of incidents sentimental. The on-marching Federals gave the people something to think of and when fighting actually began at Kenesaw Mountain, the familiar talk of evacuation was heard everywhere.

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Kenesaw—on and around this rough and brush-grown mountain warfare raged and as reports reached the town men gathered on the streets. Once the dread alarm, “The Yankees are coming,” was started and a near panic ensued which changed to rejoicing when it was learned that instead of coming, the Yankees were fleeing before Confederate cavalry.

There came a day, however, when neither the Confederate left on Lost Mountain nor its right on Kenesaw, nor both, could hold back the enemy and there was quick action at the hospital for removal, this time to Atlanta. The stores were shipped ahead. The sick and wounded were moved. A splendid amount of whiskey was sent to the woods for hiding lest it should fall into the hands of the enemy and make of a sober Yankee, bad enough at best, a devil of a drunken one. As couriers brought in news of the advance of the enemy, excitement ran high and in spite of Doctor Graham's orders confusion prevailed.

Miss Cummins had already gone to Atlanta by train with the first shipment of hospital patients. Doctor Graham had followed with the second lot. Ann Leuin was to remain with others of the force in Marietta and follow with the last party.

But in the confusion attending the hurried exit of the Confederates before the incoming of the Federals, she with several others was yet in Marietta when the enemy entered the town.

Certain that for one day at least she must here remain, Ann Leuin hastened to the home of a leading citizen who occupied one of the best buildings and who had determined not to leave it. This home, however, was at once selected as headquarters for the Federal officers and the family were forced to leave at short order, the officers, however, offering Ann Leuin and the two other nurses hospitality and protection.

Before nightfall a second home had been taken possession of for other officers and it was decided to give the Confederate nurses rooms in this other building. To this end

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the three of them were taken by the officer in charge, a Colonel, and were given into the care of a younger officer who was charged to show them every courtesy.

This sounded well and if the Colonel had stayed to see that his orders were carried out, Ann Leuin might never have had the most exciting adventure of all her war experiences.

The first thing Ann Leuin noticed about the young officer in whose charge she had been put, was his breath. It was the breath of the bottle—the disgusting Bresler breath—and noting it, an uneasy feeling took possession of her. But it was his eyes that condensed and compressed this vague uneasiness into well-defined fear. They were not screwed deep in his forehead as Mammy said Bresler's eyes were, nor were they close together. But the expression in them as he talked to Ann Leuin after he had sent the other two nurses to a room, was the same that had glittered in the eyes of Bresler the night he pressed the burning kiss upon her cheek. Again she felt the burning. Again the old fire-born words, "I hate you," rose in her mind. Nor did the actions of the young officer tend to lessen her apprehension.

The room assigned her was at the end of the hall farthest from the room the other nurses had been shown to. When she went in, the young officer entered with her. Ann Leuin's first glance about the room was reassuring. The windows were high from the ground—too high for one to enter. There was a stout key in the lock. She would lock the door, be safe for the night, and in the morning she would catch the train for Atlanta.

"The Commander has put you in my charge," the young officer said. "You are young and very beautiful little Rebel. The boys are celebrating victory. They might not carry out the Colonel's orders—when he's not about you know—and they are drinking. So to make sure that you are safe I will keep this key myself until morning. If you should want anything in the night, knock on the wall. I have the next room."

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There was contradiction in the expression of his lips and eyes to the tameness of the speech as he went out, locking the door.

For a moment after she heard his footsteps down the hall Ann Leuin stood motionless. Then she turned to the window and pushed the curtains aside. Quickly, however, she let them drop back in place. Horses were being turned into the yard under the window and scores of men were unsaddling them, talking, laughing and some of them cursing as they did so.

Confusion was all about, there was calling and shouting in the house and from the street there came the rumble of heavy wagons and ambulances and Ann Leuin knew the Union wounded were being taken in a long procession to the hospital that had but a week before been filled with Confederates.

But this did not interest her now. She was a prisoner. A man, that made her think of Bresler, had the key in his possession. Ann Leuin did not cry. She thought—thought hard and as she did so her fear somewhat left her.

As the shades of night fell the men in the yard below went away, some coming into the house she judged by the noise. Not long after dark she heard footsteps outside her door and the turning of the key. It was Bresler the second.

“The Colonel told me to look after your comfort and safety in person,” he said entering the room. “So fair a little Rebel as you appearing at supper might incite riot. So I bring you something to eat,” and he placed food on the table and lit a candle which he brought. It came to her mind afterward that just before lighting the candle he dropped a bundle he held under his arm, on a chair by the door. She did not notice this now, however.

After trying a few moments to engage her in conversation he went out and again the lock turned between them.

For her there was to be no sleep that night and her eyes did not so much as rest on the food. After the house had quieted down she again heard steps at her door—stealthy

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steps. She listened for the key, but before she heard it someone spoke at the other end of the hall and the outsider went away.

She knew he would return. If—or when he did, Ann Leuin determined to fight him to the death if necessary. She had no mailed fist of heirlooms now to make an effective weapon. Her only ring was the gold band with the precious code inside and its edges were round and smooth.

Then her fighting spirit seemed to fail her. What could she do where strength was to match strength—a white soft handed woman against a drunken soldier? There came the urge to pray for deliverance and kneeling by the window she folded her hands, raised her face to the dim grey outside and began the familiar words, “Now I lay me down to sleep.”

“But I’m not laying me down to sleep—I’m staying awake. I was never taught a prayer for such a horrid fix as I am in. Perhaps God doesn’t know me at all, but there are some he knows.” And again she prayed, “for the sake of my dear mother, for the sake of good Father Chiniquy, who was a shepherd to his flock, for the sake of your faithful child, Doctor Graham, for the sake of my dear old black Mammy, now gone to heaven, for the sake of all your good children, hear me and touch the heart of the Colonel so that he will come and save me from this drunken Yankee—the worst of them all. Send somebody—something—some way! Please!”

She had not spoken loud. But almost with her last uttered words the whinny of a horse reached her ears. She sprang up, snatched the curtains aside and leaned over the casement.

Again the whinny. The horse stood under the window.

“What’s that! Can it be!” Ann Leuin exclaimed between a laugh and a cry. “El Capitan! Boy! Boy! El Capitan,” she whispered excitedly.

A low, glad whinny was the answer.

“It is! It is! Thank God!” she half sobbed with

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tears in her eyes. "He will take me to Atlanta. How glad I am somebody stole my horse."

Again she leaned out and spoke. The horse came nearer and answered softly.

Ann Leuin turned back to the room. As she did so her eye caught sight of something blue on the chair by the door. With eager hands she shook it out—a Union soldier's fighting garments. A moment only she hesitated. Then, as if she had become automatic, she turned down the bed cover, snatched off a sheet which she tore in strips and twisted it into a rope.

Not since she was a child had Ann Leuin ridden astride a horse. Now she must. Otherwise she could never get beyond the pickets on El Capitan. They would think her crazy, a female spy or a lady horse thief. But in the hated blue—ah, even blue was now desirable—God sent!

She slipped the suit on. She let herself out the window—down—down, and El Capitan, as if understanding came close. Standing beside him, Ann Leuin put her arms around his neck and kissed him over and over, and with her face against his neck as in past days, she cried with pain and joy called keen and fresh from memory. And she petted him whispering, "Keep still—if you love me, good boy, *keep still!*"

Very carefully she led him around behind the house where in the pale light of a rising moon she found a pile of saddles with an old hat on top. A moment later there was only a gate between the dark house and the open highway. Cautiously the girl and the horse made their way. But once outside, with her small feet set fast in the stirrups and her gold-crowned head covered to her ears by the dirty hat, Ann Leuin gave the word and El Capitan was on the way to Atlanta.

Seeing a blue coat on an officer's mount, the Union pickets let her pass. But when after leaving Marietta some miles behind, she ran into Confederate lines, the chase was on.

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It was a wild, wild ride. Shots and shouts followed the fleeing blue coat, but on and on she sped leaving her pursuers ever farther behind, El Capitan keeping his gait until they came to a river.

How deep it was Ann Leuin did not know. Slowing down, but without hesitation, El Capitain entered it, casting up a shower of silvery spray. For a time his steady feet struck bottom. Then the bottom eased out and Ann Leuin knew her horse was swimming. The water came up and up—over her feet—her knees. But the head of the horse was high. She spoke to him, kindly and sat quiet and sure. Then it was over. There was the sound of substance under sure feet again and shortly they touched bank on the other side. As they started on again Ann Leuin found herself singing, "Praise God"—not as her mother sang, but as the slaves sang in the little meeting house, rolling out the word "Gaw-a-a-awd" in a monotonous but glad rhythm.

It was just after daylight that Doctor Graham was summoned to the hospital entrance to identify a peculiar character that had come dashing in on a splendid horse and insisted on seeing him.

When near enough to identify, the strange person, a Union soldier with a girl's face, and golden hair not all concealed by a dirty hat, sprang from a foam-flecked horse, and throwing a pair of blue-covered arms around his neck, laughed and cried both as she said, "Dear Doctor Graham—you left me for the Yanks! But God—and El Capitan were with me—I am here—let me get these vile rags off!"

CHAPTER XIII

THE BENEFIT BALL

MUCH alike everywhere in scenes and scents and sounds, even in hospital life the atmosphere of the outside world drifts in and Ann Leuin found conditions different in Atlanta from what they had been in the small towns where her service had taken her.

Atlanta took pleasure in giving big balls. There had been many of them—splendid and gorgeous affairs. Now came the Bragg Army Benefit Ball and everybody was going.

“Let us go to the ball,” Doctor Graham said to Ann Leuin. “It will be your first for a long time and my last forever. Ann Leuin turned her eyes inquiringly to Doctor Graham. He had never, in even a remote way referred to his condition. To every inquiry he was always all right. Uncomplaining, he went about his work, resting often and longer, but never hinting that he was weak or weary.

Then to her inquiring look he said, laughing, “I am soon going home to my mother. She is one of the dear old-fashioned Methodists who believes it very sinful to dance. So you see it must be my last—at least for a long time.

When Ann Leuin decided to attend the ball the question of a costume came up. Since the war she had been wearing the plainest of clothing. There was nothing like a party dress in her scanty wardrobe. But she had her wallet of gold. Her mother had told her to take enough of it to buy a nice dress. She now determined to do this. Incidentally, she was to have dealings with some of the war-time extortioners.

Next to Abraham Lincoln and those who had put him in the President's chair, Miss Cummins regarded this class of war money-makers as the most reprehensible of all man-

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kind. Nor was Miss Cummins alone in her opinion. Much space was given by the newspapers to condemnation of extortioners and speculators and women were implored, as a measure of rebuke, to abstain from festivities and an expenditure for unnecessary finery.

But none of this stopped the money making nor the social functions. The rich were getting richer. There must be opportunity for them to spend their gold and enjoy the pleasure of display, and as an excuse for keeping up the morale of war-burdened officers, what could be better than balls and banquets?

Having heard much of extortioners and speculators before she started out on a shopping tour in Atlanta, Ann Leuin was prepared to find prices high. After her first visit to the shops she knew that all said of the outrageous system was true.

With Miss Cummins they looked at some knives needed for the hospital. They were \$150 per dozen. Ladies' shoes were \$200; silk was beyond all reach. Calico sold at the price of silk, and delaine, that had sold before the war for twenty-five cents, was now three and four dollars.

It was a delaine pattern—blue like her eyes. It could not be a party dress for she must have it made for other wear. But with a lace fichu worn low and a sash it could be made to look quite dressy and to her it meant more now than had the handsome birthday party dress with its hand-made French flounces.

When Doctor Graham saw Ann Leuin in her new dress he stared in undisguised admiration.

“Ann Leuin Laury! You are beautiful!—fair in face and form and heart. If I never go to another ball, it is enough that you are mine for this one night!”

With her first glimpse of the brilliantly lighted ball room it seemed to Ann Leuin she suddenly found herself back to her own world after an unnatural sojourn in a far, strange country. The music—the lights—the handsome gowns—the flashing jewels—the lace and buttons and em-

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blems of Confederate officers—the fragrance of flowers—the scent of perfume! For a time she wanted nothing only to look and listen and breathe in this exotic atmosphere.

She was not one of them, however, and expected no attention; for beside the rich brocades, shiny satins and imported laces, her new blue dress was too plain for notice.

But Ann Leuin's hair, which had a long time been pinned and banded back, was now turned loose as in past gladsome days and fell into curls as naturally as she herself fell into place, so that without jewels it was not long before admiring eyes were cast on her.

Doctor Graham was not dancing. But he brought partners to Ann Leuin and his kind face glowed with tender pleasure as he caught sight of her now and then, here and there, in the mass of moving color. And every time she came back to him, flushed and laughing, full of life and the pleasure of the ball as he had never seen her.

Among the gentlemen presented to Ann Leuin was a young Confederate officer by name Captain Cole.

Doctor Graham noticed that the smile left Ann Leuin's face during the moment of her meeting with this gentleman. He wondered why, for at that time he did not know that this was the officer she had so often described—the officer whose careless indifference to the suffering of a train load of men had made him for her a symbol of selfish, snobbish, heartless egotism. Captain Cole—the name the sick soldier had spoken as Ann Leuin leaned against the seat in the crowded car near Corinth.

But if Ann Leuin's impression was far from pleasant, not so with Captain Cole's. Admiration was written all over his face, for though he had passed the quiet little nurse on the hospital train half a dozen times, he had not noticed her.

With the assurance of small calibre in military finery, he asked for a dance with Ann Leuin and was disappointed when she asked to be excused as, unaccustomed to dancing, she was too tired to dance more that night.

The measure of the new admirer's desire to cultivate her

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acquaintance was then demonstrated in a most disconcerting way, for he said he too was tired of dancing and would much prefer to talk with her. To be frank he wanted to speak with her about an important matter of business.

"I am here with Doctor Graham," she answered. "We too have a matter of business to talk over. Can your business be briefly discussed?"

"Indeed yes."

Ann Leuin turned toward Doctor Graham who said, "I will wait for you."

Captain Cole conducted Ann Leuin to one of several near-by rest rooms and when they were seated and he had taken a long look at her he said, "So this is Ann Leuin Laury? I do not wonder that my friend lost his heart and his head to the Belle of Mississippi."

"What do you mean?" she exclaimed in surprise. "Do you know Mr. Bresler—Thomas Jefferson Bresler?"

"He is my closest, dearest friend."

"Indeed?"

"Yes. And through him you are not a stranger to me. May I ask if you have changed your attitude to him—that is, if you would consider him again as a suitor?"

"Why do you ask?"

"For this reason. If Bresler is out of the running, I get in."

"Do you? How, I wonder?"

"What's to hinder?"

"This," and Ann Leuin raised her hand, the third finger of which was circled by a little gold band.

"A wedding ring! And you belong to another?"

"I belong to another."

"Bresler will be interested—Bresler will be sorry, for he has never given up hope. But Bresler will be glad that his old rival, his hated enemy is not the man."

"His rival—his enemy? Of whom do you speak?"

Captain Cole laughed. "How like a woman! Have you forgotten him already? I speak of Norcrosse."

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“ How do you know Norcrosse is not the one? ”

“ The last, as well as the first, time I saw Norcrosse he was in the hands of a mob being dragged away with a hemp rope. I did not know who he was then. If I had I would have hanged him myself. Twice would I have hanged him. Once for being the damnedest Yankee spy that ever crossed the lines, and again for beating my friend Bresler in a fair fight for the Belle of Mississippi. No, you never married Norcrosse. He escaped the rope—escaped because of a bit of code writing he wore next his traitorous bosom. He swore it was an important cipher message for Richmond. I took the message myself to Richmond. It was a fraud—a fool combination of dots and dashes, letters, etc.

“ What was it? ”

“ I don't remember—it had no value, nor do I remember whether he was alive when I unloaded my prisoners at Libby. He was running blood half the distance and was out of his head. A lot of the Yankees were dead long before we got to Richmond. It's safe to say he was one of them.”

“ So Norcrosse is dead? ” Ann Leuin observed quietly after a moment of silence. “ I had not quite forgotten him though it has been several years since I saw him.”

“ Now that I have told you who you are not married to, tell me who you are married to and why you yet go by your maiden name.”

“ I use my maiden name—well, because, and because I like it. I started in the war with it. After the war will be time enough to change it.”

“ So much for the name—thank you. Now—the man—who is he? I will go to Mobile Christmas. When he knows I have met you Bresler will ask a hundred questions, first of them, ‘ Whom did she marry? ’ ”

“ And if you do not know, you cannot tell him,” and Ann Leuin rose.

“ Do you think I cannot find out? ”

“ I shall do nothing to prevent it.”

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“ What shall I tell Bresler for you ? ”

“ Nothing.”

On an uncovered roof set with tubs of branching plants, Ann Leuin, later in the evening, sat with Doctor Graham. She had told him briefly of her talk with Captain Cole. But there were matters of more importance to speak of. Doctor Graham, as he had told Ann Leuin, was soon going home to the quiet country place, aside from the path of war, where his mother had kept a tiny home in a garden of old fashioned flowers. Here, tired of heart and body, he hoped for rest.

This was the night Ann Leuin gave Doctor Graham her *El Capitan*.

“ I cannot keep him here,” she said when he objected to taking her splendid horse, “ nor can I send him home—alas there is no home to send him to. He would only be stolen again. Besides, I want you to have him—I want you to ride him—ride him and grow strong in the open. Ride him and think of me.”

“ I will accept a half interest in him then,” Doctor Graham said laughingly. “ He will be *our* horse. I will ride *our* horse. You will come up to rest up a few weeks with my dear old mother and you too will ride *our* horse. Perhaps sometimes we may both ride *our* horse.”

It was while they were talking of the visit to the little home and “ *our* horse,” Captain Cole drew near and just outside the door was listening.

“ *Our* home—*our* horse,” he said to himself. “ It wasn’t so hard to discover. I’ll congratulate her before the night is over—just to let her know I know.”

So he did. “ He is a splendid fellow—congratulations,” Captain Cole said as he bowed low.

“ Who ? ” Ann Leuin asked.

Captain Cole laughed heartily and said, “ No need to be ashamed of him ? ”

“ Of whom ? ” she again asked.

“ I speak of Doctor Graham,” and he looked knowingly at her.

THE BENEFIT BALL

"Oh—ashamed of him—ashamed? He is one of the grandest, truest, most lovable men God ever let live."

"Of course—of course," and Captain Cole laughed wisely.

While the benefit balls were being given in all their show and splendor and the extortioners and profiteers were gathering in their gain, battles bloody and terrible were being waged just beyond the gates of Atlanta which city was Sherman's objective point in his campaign from Chattanooga.

The battle of Peach Tree Creek had started a stream of torn and dying men to the hospitals of Atlanta and with every succeeding battle until up to that of Ezra Church the numbers increased until there was not room for them all and rudely improvised places housed hundreds.

Then came the inevitable—the climax tragedy of the long continued bombardments by Sherman—the destruction by flames of a great portion of the city and the investment of the rest by Union troops to make ready for the famous "March to the Sea."

Before the city fell Doctor Graham left Atlanta for his mother's home, physician to the suffering no longer, but himself a patient. Ann Leuin accompanied him and El Capitan was not left behind.

Miss Cummins, who after three years of continued service was much in need of rest, went to her home in Mobile. She expected Ann Leuin to go with her but offered no objection to the girl's determination to go with Doctor Graham.

"He has labored for everybody else—he has given his life for our soldiers. Shall he be deserted? Not by Ann Leuin Laury. I will come to you—after—I will come later."

CHAPTER XIV

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

WHILE Ann Leuin Laury was slowly moving southward before the advancing Union army; while she was ministering to the last needs of Doctor Graham, and later encountering Bresler again on her life path, Bill Rixse was probing into the vitals of The Knights of the Golden Circle under its ever changing cloak of names, in a way that would have stimulated the heart of James Honeycutt to psalms of praise and shouts of joy had it been possible for him to know. And while Ann Leuin and Del Norcrosse were learning the life experience of sorrow and loss and separation, the three birds of a feather, whose actions had so aroused the interest of Norcrosse in Washington, were flocking together and the place of rendezvous was, as he had seen, 604 H Street, N.W.

In addition to the three original birds, the real priests or persons so disguised, the lady with the pocket-book mouth, and the young ladies of the house, a close observer might have seen other persons now and then going in and out here. One was a small cringing sort of creature—short thick-set, round shouldered, brawny armed, his stooped walk hinted a gorilla ancestry. His cheeks were high, his skin sallow, his eyes grey and small, his hair hung tangled in his neck and his beard was of thin and straggling sandy hair. Stupidity was written all over him. His name was Atzerodt, but by the group in the Surratt home he was familiarly called "Port Tobacco."

Another of those who had entry at the door of what Norcrosse had called the "puzzle house" was a young giant whose mould suggested kinship with the gods.

But Norcrosse was not there to watch these men and wonder why the giant went to the house at one time dressed as a clergyman and again like a plumber, and how it

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happened that if he were an honest workman, his hands were always soft and white. Norcrosse never saw these and other men until he looked upon them as they sat shackled to heavy balls before a military tribunal to be charged with murder—and God, such a murder!

Back in the early days of Washington the Davy Burns plantation took in a third of the original site. When the country district began to be a village, General Van Ness built a house on this old homestead and a very good house it was, two and a half stories high, well made of brick. The partition walls all ran to the same depth as the cellar walls and the underground compartments, which were reached through a trap door from an upper room, had a use. One was a wine cellar, one an ice house, one a store room and another a slave prison.

This lonesome place, situated as it was in the centre of a two-acre tract surrounded by a high brick wall and filled with a thick growth of trees and shrubbery, stood near the confluence of the Tyber and Potomac Rivers, which made it easily accessible by water. During the Civil War it was the property of Thomas Greene whose sons were all in the Confederate army. It was rumored that strange meetings were held in this place, yet though it was always under suspicion, nothing ever came to light of any meetings held there, as the number was small and select that passed its shady doors.

Among those who knew the lonesome old house in the thick garden by the confluence of the two rivers, were the three friends whose common interests drew them together at 604 H Street, N.W., since this was to be the objective point in an act of amazing audacity and daring which the three friends were planning.

Evenings when the three met to confer and plan, a social hour was often spent in the neat little Surratt parlor before the plotters went into conference in an upper chamber. At such times there was music and sometimes dancing and often dramatic numbers by the actor, for in the group

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the brilliant John Wilkes Booth was the centre of interest and admiration and as different from the others as a polished gem is different from one uncut or a thoroughbred is different from grade stock.

Especially was Booth admired by the ladies and when he addressed them in the rôle of some Shakesperean character, he seemed to be no more a man of their day but a romancer or cavalier of the golden past. Anna Surratt's admiration for him was unbounded, and if Weischmann, a close family friend of the Surratts, had, before the addition of the brilliant Booth to the family group, thought in any sentimental way of his landlady's sweet young daughter, he had the pain of seeing her affections swept away, a pain not all to be kept covered as he learned later, when before a military tribunal it was shown that the fair young lady had used a picture he had given her entitled, "Spring, Summer and Autumn" to conceal a portrait of the handsome and fascinating Booth.

The best part of the social hour in the Surratt parlor was when the talented actor interpreted bits of Shakesperean rôles he acted on the stage. One evening the subject turned to ghosts and after describing a ghost scene with realistic power he suddenly said, "But soft; Behold! Lo there it comes again! I'll cross it though it blast me—stay—illusion! If thou hast any sound, or use a voice, speak to me!" He made them feel if not see the ghost. Seeing the effect he continued, "Angels and Ministers of grace defend us! Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned, bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell? . . . 'Tis now the very witching time of night when churchyards yawn and hell itself breaths out contagion to the world . . . Hence or I'll unhair thy head; thou shalt be whipped with wire and stewed in brine!"

Wild-eyed and with disheveled hair Booth saw the ghosts, and so effective was his acting the young ladies screamed. This was the climax of the parlor meeting.

John Surratt had already gone upstairs. When Booth

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and Weischmann entered his room they found several pistols and a number of knives placed along the edge of the bed.

"Each man to his kind," said Booth lifting a gun in either hand.

"The blade for me," and John Surratt took up and flashed a keen-knife.

"And what for you?" and Booth turned to Weischmann.

"What would your guns and blades be worth without knowledge as to where and when and how to use them? Do I not furnish a weapon as important as steel?"

"I can say as to that," answered Surratt. "From Richmond to Canada my good friend, your service is indispensable and no man is rendering better aid to the Order than the man who can hold a Government job, get information and give it."

"A regular Fourth degree accomplishment," said Booth. "But let us to our plot and 'By the Lord, our plot is a good plot as ever was laid; our friends true and constant: a good plot, good friends, and full of expectation: an excellent plot very good friends,' so said Hamlet. So say I."

"Booth finds words for every occasion in his Shakespeare," John Surratt said to Weischmann.

"Yes, except Lincoln—Shakespeare had no such trash to deal with."

"Lincoln?" questioned Booth. "Hear what he said about Lincoln and our nation. I have said it before. Hear it again! 'O nation miserable, with an untitled tyrant, bloody sceptred. When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again?' What a glorious opportunity for a man to immortalize himself killing Lincoln."

"What good would that do?" Weischmann asked.

"The ambitious youth who fired the Ephesian dome outlives in fame the pious fool who reared it," was Booth's answer.

"Well, what was that ambitious youth's name?"

"That I don't know."

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“ Then where’s the fame you speak of? Discretion is the better part of valor—for me at least.”

“ Discretion—indeed how long would a spy like yourself last in Government service without discretion? ”

Weischmann glanced toward the four uneasily as he said, “ I am not a spy. Do not call me such.”

“ A rose by any other name—you know. You get Government information. You’ve got the cipher code—call your service what you like—it’s a good service. But let’s to the plot.”

The man of the guns, the man of the blades and the soft voiced man of the cipher code, sat close.

“ I’ve found another man to help us carry off Abe Lincoln—a fellow from Maryland named Arnold. He knows the country well. If Payne, the young giant, stays in the game he’s the man to do the actual seizing. Lincoln walks every night from the White House to the War Department. Sometimes it is late. Payne can handle him as Lincoln walks alone. He can be hurried down through the garden of the White House and from there to the old Van Ness place by the rivers.”

“ If we succeed in getting the Black Republican across the Potomac, Mosby will take him as a prisoner of war—Lord God, but won’t the damned Yankees howl if we get him across the Potomac to Mosby! If we cannot get him across the Potomac, he can be secreted indefinitely in this old house.”

“ Maybe so. But we need another good man or two,” John Surratt said. “ I wonder what Doctor Bowles did with that fellow Bill Rixse? I knew he was the right kind as soon as I set eyes on him. Bowles got the same impression.”

“ I expect Bowles sent him on to Canada.”

“ Or maybe to Louisville—Rixse knew the place well and they were in need of a man there—so Bowles said.”

“ At any rate he’s gone. I’ve had my eyes open for

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him. He's left town or he would have found us. There are plenty of others."

"But we must exercise care—extreme care in making selections," cautioned Weischmann. "What is this Payne's record?"

"The first I ever heard of him he was nursing in Pennsylvania after the battle of Gettysburg. His name was Powell then. His father, a woman nurse told me, is a Baptist preacher."

"Baptist preacher!" Weischmann exclaimed. "And he is only a Vestibule member of the Order. Hadn't we better wait until he gets the Fourth degree?"

"He's not going to get it. He's not the right stuff. There's a lot of men think they are full-fledged members of the Order who never have had and never will know the Fourth degree. Payne couldn't be trusted with the Fourth degree, but we can trust him for what we want done for he will assume the danger."

"How much did Jacob Thompson have on deposit when you were in Canada?"

"I was not expected to know. But there's more than one way to skin a cat. He has \$250,000."

"Where does all this money come from?" Booth asked.

"From Richmond," Surratt answered.

"Where does Richmond get it? None of the foreign powers are friendly."

"Except the Pope," Weischmann corrected.

"He wouldn't furnish money."

"No," said Surratt, "it is mostly Government money sent out to purchase provisions, arms, hospital supplies, etc. It is gold. The Order gets it."

"They are willing to pay us for the work?"

"Yes—our own price if we carry out our plans."

"How much did those fellows get that sent the small-pox boxes to Abe Lincoln?"

"I don't know exactly, but Thompson pays fair money

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for goods delivered. They were sent from the South by water. They got as far as the express office I know."

"What was it?"

"Old shirts mostly—rotten as hell. Several Yankee editors got small boxes of the same stuff, which proved all right as they had light attacks of small-pox."

"I can't say I like such methods of warfare," Booth said.

"Why not?" asked Weischmann.

"Not a fair way to fight. Guns and knives are all right—and cipher codes," Booth added laughing.

A knock at the door put a stop to all talking. A cautious opening showed Anna Surratt who came to say Payne was down stairs.

"Just a minute," said Weischmann as he gathered up his papers. "Don't trust him too far, John Harrison," addressing Surratt, "I'm afraid of him," and he made a hurried exit.

"What's the matter with Weischmann that he's afraid of everybody and everything?" Booth asked. "Is he a damned coward?"

"No. Just in a ticklish place. For guns and knives a man can make an excuse. But who can explain the possession of an enemy code—especially when he is in a Government position?"

"He told me he only uses it to write poetry," and Booth pushed back his silky black hair and laughed heartily.

CHAPTER XV

“ CONSECRATED GOLD ”

It was two days after the adoption of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution that Doctor Graham's big soul left his out-worn body. The dashing rides on El Capitan Ann Leuin had prescribed for Doctor Graham were never taken. He remained at his post of duty in Atlanta until one day he fell—and was taken home.

Ann Leuin went with him and it was not the mother, but the better trained and younger woman who ministered to the passing hero—the quiet hero kind unheralded by trumpets. It was Ann Leuin who folded his hands over his resting heart as he had a hundred times folded the hands of men over hearts grown cold.

Not long before his voice was hushed Doctor Graham told Ann Leuin of a dream he had. He had spoken several times of Norcrosse and seemed thinking of the time when Ann Leuin should find him and be happy. It was following a day he had talked with her he dreamed.

“ Is he—the man you love—tall, straight built, wiry? Is his face thin—his mouth large and strong? Are his eyes grey—grey like polished steel—keen—alive—? ”

“ Yes—like that. ”

“ And a scar across his forehead? ”

“ I never saw the scar. He wrote me he had received a sabre cut. ”

“ It lies straight across the middle of his forehead. It might be mistaken for a deep line if he were an older man. ”

“ You must have seen him? ”

“ Yes—very distinctly. And he spoke. ”

“ What did he say—oh tell me! ”

“ I cannot remember—it floats—and floats about my brain—intangible—. I have tried—tried—but it gets away from me. ”

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“ He is alive? It was not a spirit, nor a ghost? ”

“ No—no. A man, standing at my bed at the turning of the night—alive—real! You will find him, so.”

Ann Leuin thought of this as she put early spring flowers in the old fashioned vases and wrapped white papers around the rose geranium pots so they could stand at the foot of the casket. He had always been fond of rose geraniums; had pinched the leaves and from his fingers inhaled the fragrance.

After the funeral Doctor Graham's mother shut up the little home and went away with a married daughter who also took El Capitan until such time as Ann Leuin could get him. Ann Leuin went to Mobile for the visit she had promised Miss Cummins.

With the passing of Doctor Graham, in some strange way it seemed to Ann Leuin she was free—free from further duty to the sick and suffering—free to take up a straight and definite search for her long lost lover. In Mobile she expected to rest and plan, and then go on.

“ Captain Cole has called four times to chat a few moments,” Miss Cummins said as she and Ann Leuin spent their first evening together. “I didn't know at first why he came as we are only acquaintances—I know his mother. But after he had asked four times when you were coming, I knew. I think he will call soon.”

Miss Cummin's surmise that Captain Cole would be an early caller was correct. He came the next day and having heard of the death of Doctor Graham was prepared to meet a young widow. For the occasion he had a speech of condolence ready.

There was, however, nothing about Ann Leuin to suggest widowhood and when he began his speech by addressing her as Mrs. Graham, her blue eyes opened wide in amazement as she said, “Why do you address me in this fashion?”

“ I don't understand you.”

“ Nor I you.”

CONSECRATED GOLD

"But surely you remember telling me you were married."

"I told you I belong to another. That other did not happen to be my dear, good friend Doctor Graham."

"Well, well," and Captain Cole laughed heartily. "So you are not a widow—well, well! I declare! Bresler will be so interested. When I told him of meeting you in Atlanta and that you wore a wedding ring and belonged to another, my heart ached for him. I believe if business hadn't been extra brisk he would have stayed drunk a month—to drown his disappointment, you know. To understand how well a man loves, it was necessary to know how hard it is for him to give up. Bresler has never given up and I am sure, when he knows you are free and still Ann Leuin Laury, that he will court you all over again and with better success."

"But I am *not* free. I can be courted by nobody," and Ann Leuin glanced at the gold band on her finger.

"Not free? Surely you are not tied to the memory of Norcrosse. You cannot be tied to that man for he is dead."

"You told me in Atlanta you *thought* him dead."

"Did I leave room for doubt? I did not intend to do so. When I last saw him he was all but dead—bloody, unconscious, cut up, shot up, choked and kicked. He was delivered in this condition to Libby. Reports record the death of almost every one of the Union cattle I turned over as prisoners. I know in reason he is dead—good and dead."

"He did not die in Libby."

"Who said so?"

"He did."

"To whom?"

"To me. He escaped from Libby."

"Escaped! And you know where he is. You are married to *him*?"

"I am not married to him. I have not seen him for years. I do not know whether he is living or dead."

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Captain Cole glanced at the ring. Ann Leuin noticed his questioning gaze but said nothing until he remarked, "You wear a wedding ring, yet say you are not married. I believe you are unless the ring is a puzzle ring. Is it? Let's see? "

The crude attempt to satisfy a curiosity amused Ann Leuin. She laughed as she said, "Wedding rings are often a puzzle I have heard."

"They should not be, no more than this ring should be a puzzle. It is only a little circle of gold."

"Consecrated gold—and a circle has no end," Ann Leuin remarked dropping her eyes to the ring.

"Consecrated gold," Captain Cole repeated. "The mystery deepens. What shall I tell Bresler about this wedding ring? "

"All you know, Captain Cole."

"All I know? Well—all I know is that you call it 'consecrated gold' and Bresler don't know what consecrated gold is."

"I am sure you are right in this opinion."

Captain Cole's visit with Ann Leuin was not extended for she had little to say and he was in something of a hurry to find Bresler and give a report of his call. Before leaving he urged her, just for the sake of "Auld Lang Syne," to let Bresler call. This she stoutly refused to do.

CHAPTER XVI

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“CONSECRATED gold,” Bresler exclaimed when Captain Cole had told him of his call on Ann Leuin Laury and his effort to see the ring. “You should have examined that ring. Especially is it imperative since it appears that Norcrosse escaped Libby.”

“Is it a life and death matter—especially when it can’t be done?”

“Listen to me. Over four years ago, I was, as you know, a guest at the Laury plantation just out of Vicksburg. This damn cur of a Norcrosse was there. Ann Leuin slipped away with him one night; went to the far end of the lake in a boat; went ashore to spoon and was treed by wild boars. In this tree he took advantage of her and tied her up in some kind of a bond of eternal loyalty. The two of them took the oath and he gave her a ring which contained a code of some kind. I overheard the conversation but couldn’t catch the code itself. It was to be worn by her as a token of unbroken fidelity. Later I found the code on the tree they had been in—cut deep—and a cross signed in blood. I have that code—the fidelity oath in cipher, as it were. You shall see it.”

From a locked drawer Bresler took a paper which he handed to Captain Cole. “See—the three letters spell A.L.L. What the dots and dashes mean I do not know. But the cross must have been made by Norcrosse. On the original it was stained red. This is the code. This is what was cut on the inside of the ring.”

“God alive!” Captain Cole exclaimed looking closely at the paper. “That’s the same stuff the infernal spy drew from his breast the night the guerillas caught him.

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He swore it was a message to Richmond. I took it there to find it a fraud."

"You see now the importance of the message. If the ring she wears is the same ring, by its sign her love for Norcrosse is yet green and if, as she says, he escaped Libby, he may yet be in the land of the living to thwart my plan. If this code is not in the ring—then its another ring, that's all. This ring must be examined."

"And what then?"

"If the ring carries the code—then there will be a big job for somebody trailing my enemy and sending him where he should have gone by hemp or blade or bullet in the beginning."

"I'd like the job of trailing the damned spy. It's in my line. But how see the ring, that's the problem."

"I'll see the ring. Meantime, do you know somebody on the inside at Richmond who will find out for certain whether Norcrosse did or did not escape?"

"What's the Order for, and what am I in it for, if not such work as this?"

"And what am I paying my money for, if not to get some benefits?"

"Let us talk straight business. Just what, in gold, will you give me for information concerning your dear friend, that good friend to whom you so gladly lost the Belle of Mississippi?"

"Information be damned—unless it is information that the worms have eaten him."

"And in case this task yet remains for the worms—just what, in gold, will you give me—using delicate language—to provide the table for their feast?"

"Five thousand dollars—gold."

"You place small value on big danger—big friendship—big game. But this I say—the information I intend to get, the work I intend to do, will be worth ten thousand to somebody, if not my friend Bresler."

“ What I do depends on that ring. Wait until I have seen it.”

“ But she refuses to let you call.”

“ What of that? ”

A fortnight later, on a day when Miss Cummins had gone to town and Ann Leuin was busily engaged writing to her mother, she heard footsteps behind her chair. Turning she faced Bresler.

“ Ann Leuin Laury,” he said bowing courteously. “ What a pleasure! ” and he extended his hand.

“ Who gave you entrance? ” she asked.

“ The same friend who always gives me what I want—Thomas Jefferson Bresler.” He had stepped nearer and his breath became a memorable factor of the meeting. “ What will not a man do whose love has long eluded him? Did I not tell you in the beginning that with me all would be fair in love? Now here we are, you, the Belle of Mississippi, and your old time lover, Bresler of Mobile—and Norcrosse is *not* here.”

“ I am not alone in the house—as perhaps you may think,” Ann Leuin said coldly. “ If you have any business here and can conduct yourself like a gentleman long enough to state it, do so.”

The old time anger flashed over Bresler showing in his eye, his cheek, his breathing. But he controlled himself and said, “ You have not yet quite outlived the Norcrosse method you contracted in his company, of insulting one. Do not be alarmed. Your insinuation does not touch me. Let us sit down I have business with you.”

“ I prefer standing.”

“ Very well, fair one. I will speak promptly. First I say to you that I forgive you freely for every insult and neglect you heaped upon me when I was your guest at your never-to-be-forgotten birthday party. You should not be blamed, however. You would never have done it had you not been under the influence of that infernal cur and coward

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of a Norcrosse—that sneak—that snake—that traitor—that spy Norcrosse! ”

There was a rosy spot on each of Ann Leuin’s cheeks and the light danced like sparks in her blue eyes, but she made no reply.

“ I forgive you, I say—*forgive* you Ann Leuin Laury! ”

“ Have you anything else to say? ” she asked after another moment of silence.

“ Yes—this, and hear me now. Love that can stand the test is the only true love. My love for you has stood the hardest—the fiercest test possible for any self-respecting man to put his love to—the test of disgrace. And though you have brought comment, criticism and question upon your once pure name, even this makes no barrier to my love for you. ”

Ann Leuin’s blue eyes were wide open and wondering and yet bright with sparks. They were steady on Bresler’s face and she asked, “To what do you refer? What are you talking about—what have I done to disgrace anybody?”

“ Heavens! Is your sense of honor and fine judgment so destroyed you do not know that it is a disgrace for a woman to nurse men—nurse *common* men—men of every kind—*dirty* men—a woman doing this! ”

For what seemed a long space of time Ann Leuin held her eyes steadily on him. When she spoke it was in her sweetest voice and she smiled.

“ Thank you for forgiving me. It is kind—big-hearted—it is just, it is Christian for you to forgive me for ministering to the sick and suffering of Southern soldiers! For putting food in mouths when the dismembered hand that should have held the spoon was driven by a horse hoof into the red mud of a battle field! It is so big hearted of you to forgive me for bathing a fevered brow and wiping the death damp from it, as the life passed out that had been given for the Southland! It is so just for you to forgive me for writing last messages to loved ones from a cot whose brave occupant would be in the dead wagon before morning!

It is so Christ-like for you to forgive me for doing for others what I would have others do for me and mine—even for bleeding, dirty, *common* men! Thank you, Mr. Bresler, for forgiving me!”

Bresler stood upright and yet there was something in his appearance that suggested a wilted man. He did not speak. Ann Leuin continued:

“You forgive me. But I am not kind and just and Christ-like as you are. For what you have done I can *never* forgive you!”

“What have I done?” He had no trouble speaking now.

“You have been a coward—you have been a traitor to your duty! Young, strong, able bodied, free, yet you never took up arms against the enemy! You left that for the ‘common’ man. And while he gave up his home, left his family to starve while he went to fight for the Southland whose praises you shout, you—what did you do? You stayed home and sucked the life blood from his people! No—ask me not to forgive you. I despise you—and your forgiveness.”

Bresler was so angry that for the moment he forgot what he had come for and when Ann Leuin turned and left the room he hurried from the house. Just outside the front door however, he remembered his real mission. He *must* see the ring.

From the parlor Ann Leuin had gone to the dining room. Miss Cummins’ brother, just the night before, had put a loaded gun in a corner behind the sideboard where it would be handy in case of a sudden raid. Ann Leuin had not shot a gun since she left the plantation. She had no intention of pulling the trigger on this shooting piece but something in Bresler’s eye turned her toward it.

She had just pushed it back in the corner after looking at it, when Bresler came in and stopped by the table.

She noticed that he pulled the door shut behind him as he had pulled the garden house door shut on a night at the Swan’s Neck.

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"So withering was your sarcasm and so bitter your denunciation, I fled," he said smiling, "before I had told you what I came for. There has been some discussion about the wedding ring you wear. I have a bet on it. The bet is of a nature that I cannot lose. You will do me a great favor by letting me see the ring."

"And if I do not wish to?"

"Then I will see it anyway. All is fair, you know, in love and war."

Ann Leuin was beyond hand's reach of the gun. She hesitated.

"I pledge you my honor as a Bresler I only want to look at the ring to win a bet. I will give it back to you at once. Will you give it to me or shall I take it?"

Without a word Ann Leuin drew the ring from her finger and handed it to him. He took it eagerly, turned toward the window and held it in the light. In that moment Ann Leuin drew the gun from the corner and stepped to the doorway.

"A-L-L," Bresler spelled slowly and thoughtfully. "All—*all*—well, 'All is all' I make it," and with a sort of chuckle he dropped the ring in his vest pocket.

"Yes—'All is all' but that is not all. The rest is 'Blood is blood'."

It was Ann Leuin speaking. Bresler turned quickly to catch the glint of her blue eyes shining back of a gun barrel. "All is all" she repeated slowly, "and 'Blood is blood'."

Coming to him across the measure of cold steel; the words had a peculiarly uncanny sound—and Judge Laury would have known by the sign of the dimple that the finger on the trigger was firm and ready.

"For God's sake! What have you got that gun for?" Bresler's face was white and his voice unsteady as he spoke.

"To make 'Bresler honor' effective," she promptly answered.

"The ring—oh yes, the ring. Didn't I hand it back to you?"

“ Did you? ” she asked after a moment of silence, painful to Bresler.

With nervous fingers he reached into his pocket feeling eagerly. When he brought the ring out he said, “ Well, I beg your pardon—I forgot.”

“ You are remembering nicely now,” she said. “ Put it on the table.”

With one eye on Ann Leuin, Bresler reached to the table and shoved the ring over the edge.

“ Thank you,” she said. “ Now you may go,” and she stood aside while he made a hurried exit.

Ann Leuin did not see Bresler again but Captain Cole called. The purpose of his visit was veiled by the presentation of a basket of fruit he said his mother sent Miss Cummins. What he came for was to tell Ann Leuin that Norcrosse, even though he had escaped from Libby, was one of the few officers who were captured and returned. Information direct from Richmond confirmed the report. He was insane and after describing a condition more horrible than she had ever known existed and picturing Norcrosse as a toothless, waxy faced, glassy eyed animal creeping and trotting and crawling and chattering behind bars, he told her that from this torture of body and mind death alone could bring relief.

It was to confirm or disprove this news Ann Leuin determined to go to Richmond, and at once. Thankful she was indeed that she had sufficient gold. Here at last was the life and death case her mother had prayed her to save it for.

PART FOUR

CHAPTER I

THE DYING FLAG

RICHMOND!

Fair in peace! Strong in war! Indelible in history!

Even with the cruel fist of blood-lust at her throat her green swarded hills lay beautiful and the war-ridden waters of the St. James gave back to the sun a shimmering light as glad as ever danced on the canoed wake of a Pocahontas lover. The white sails that gleamed against the blue of sky and sea were the haunting wings of long departed peace.

Ann Leuin had entered the city by land, thus missing at first sight the war shipping that hugged the docks and patrolled the farther waters. Borne up by the kindly touch of Mother Ocean's breeze, a myriad of Stars and Bars in this troubled port waved hopefully over masts and spars and sails, and seen from land looked like a fluttering garden of gay colors.

Nor were all the emblems of a Southern Confederacy on water craft. From turret and spire and pole and standard they waved over the feverish activities of war-time city life.

One of the handsomest of these new born emblems of state sovereignty floated over the Bank of Virginia. Ann Leuin stopped to look at it as she took her first walk around Capital Square. It was red and white and blue—the same colors of the emblem she had been taught until so short a time ago to love and honor. The same colors, the same fibre—the same impulsive quivering against the heavens. Just a different arrangement of the form of the colors.

Why with the same heaven to float against, the same breeze, the same colors, could not a race of like blood agree? The question came with a vague pain but this season of

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quick action was not suitable for reflection. The feet of Ann Leuin Laury were turned toward the War Department.

A few times only she paused to look at places of historic interest. The state Capitol modelled at the suggestion of Thomas Jefferson after the Maison Carrée at Nimes; St. John's Church where Patrick Henry made his famous speech ending with "Give me liberty or give me death!"—Richmond College—her feet stopped as her eyes caught sight of its walls.

Here Del Norcrosse and Gus had gone to school. Over this as over every other building the Confederate flag floated, the institution no longer dedicated to the training of men's minds, but used to house their war-shattered bodies. The walls and the flag over them were suddenly blotted out by tears. Gus—dear, brave Gus. How long it seemed since he had gone to war in his plumed helmet—how long! Could it be he would never return? And Del Norcrosse—was he no farther away than a mad cell in Libby? With this thought the tears dried as quickly as they had come and Ann Leuin hurried on.

Her visit to the War Department was unsatisfactory. Whether a Union soldier named Norcrosse had ever lived or died nobody seemed to know or care and on that Saturday night Ann Leuin went to bed heart sick.

Sunday morning she decided to attend church and pray for guidance for her Monday search. It was St. Paul's on Ninth Street to which she made her way, having heard President Davis would be at this place of worship.

Had there been no orderly with him and had she never seen him, Ann Leuin would have known the Confederate President from his picture. She studied his pale, cameo-like face and to her it seemed that he too had entered here hoping to lessen the burden and pain of war by some vision and hope of the Prince of Peace. As she studied his face Ann Leuin determined in some way, to see him next day and learn at first hand whether Norcrosse were in Richmond. Surely his friendship for her father and his appreciation

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of her own war service would call for so small a favor. With this mental plan perfected Ann Leuin felt more comfortable and turned her attention to the sermon.

The clergyman had not yet finished his discourse when an orderly entered, made his way to the pew of President Davis and handed him a telegram.

With quick fingers it was torn open. The face of the reader turned white as his eyes scanned the few lines. He arose immediately and hastened from the church.

With his going a feeling of uneasiness seemed to pervade the atmosphere which affected the congregation so that even before the benediction was pronounced they were ready to hurry out.

When Ann Leuin had entered the church Richmond had been unusually quiet except for scattered detachments of troops here and there. When she went out on the streets at noon a change had taken place. People were moving hurriedly on the streets and congregating on corners, crossings and sidewalks.

Ann Leuin was not long in learning what had happened. The paper handed Jefferson Davis by the orderly was a telegram from General Lee announcing the turning of the Confederate right on the White Oak Road, and inside of an hour from the time the message was received, news travelling like wild fire told of the success of the Federals on their left wing.

From the church Mr. Davis had hurried to the Richmond and Danville Railroad depot where he had made necessary preparations for the removal of his family on the 5.30 train.

The groups on corners and crossings grew rapidly. Runners went about spreading the news. The Yankees were coming—coming fast! Within another hour indescribable confusion that grew into pandemonium, had begun. Carts, trucks, drays, hay ricks, ambulances, army wagons, vehicles of all descriptions loaded with household goods and Government stores began to pour out of alleys and by-

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ways into the main thoroughfares. Thousands of excited men, women and children, their arms filled with belongings, rushed about.

A wise precaution for the protection of the people in this terrible time when robbery and pillage might run rampant, was taken against drunkenness, by an order of Confederate authorities for the destruction of all the commissary whiskey in the city. At the depot in the Government dock two thousand barrels were turned into the river and great quantities poured on the ground in other places.

All that sultry Sunday afternoon the streets swarmed with anxious, struggling, white-faced citizens. Gangs of negroes, for once in their lives moving with speed, with bundles, boxes—anything that could be carried or piled on the head or hoisted to the shoulders, rushed hither and thither and added to the general confusion by an incessant chorus of witless yells and outcries.

The better class of the Richmond white population acted with extraordinary calmness under the trying times, for though they had expected the evacuation, they had hoped even against hope that they might be spared this last crushing humiliation of giving up the city their brave soldiers had so long and gallantly defended.

Nobody went to bed Sunday night. The streets were filled with masses of armed men, with long lines of Government wagons, with excited citizens and laboring negroes, while the tumult was incessant. Trains were constantly going out over the Danville road and the shrieking of locomotive whistles, like some agonized live creature, was continuous from night until morning.

At the commissary depot at the head of the Government dock heavy detachments of men worked hard filling an endless train of wagons with stores provided for the great armies of Lee, and a throng of men, women and children carrying pots, pans, baskets, swarmed around the building waiting orders to help themselves.

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Banks stayed open all night and were crowded with depositors anxiously waiting their turn to withdraw their specie. Closely guarded vans at both banks and Treasury building were loaded with Government bullion to be hurried beyond reach of the coming army. Millions of dollars in Confederate and State notes were cast into the street, cut to pieces by order of Government officials and bank directors, while bales of unsigned notes were scattered broadcast about the Treasury building.

But neither the scattering of notes, the yells and calls and shouts and cries, the rattling of wagons, clinking of swords, nor the rush of horses, approached in measure the scenes and sounds that took place when the powder houses were blown up and the conflagration of the city started.

The scene was appalling! The sound of bursting shells in the Government arsenals—the roar of the flames and the volcano-like eruptions caused by the upheaval of immense masses of débris through the explosions taking place in the laboratory, arsenals and store houses; the dense masses of midnight black smoke clouds that swung like an animated pall over the city; the yells of men—screams of women—shouts of soldiers—wailing of negroes—all this made Armageddon.

Scarcely knowing which way to turn Ann Leuin paused for a few moments to look on the handsome flag floating over the Bank of Virginia. Sometimes it was concealed by the clouds of smoke. Again it stood over the leaping flames against a clear sky. For a time it fluttered beyond reach of the destroying flames that like imp fingers seemed reaching—reaching—reaching in ever lengthening stretches toward the hem of its garment. Ann Leuin watched in fascinated pain. Higher the fiery fingers reached. When once they had lain hold of the outer garment it would be but a few seconds before the heart had been consumed and its ashes mingled with those of the burning building.

It was with a sigh of relief that Ann Leuin saw the walls topple. The flag still swung. The flames' fingers

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quivered at its edge. Then a crash! The walls fell! The flag lay buried beneath them. Like something alive the Stars and Bars had battled for life—battled valiantly—now it lay buried. Ann Leuin sighed, a sigh of relief that it had been buried rather than devoured by flames.

Moving on she tried in the wild chaos to make some plan, meantime wondering with indescribable agony of mind if the flames and explosions would reach Libby.

Caught in the flow of humanity turned toward the railway station, Ann Leuin moved with hundreds of others. Should she stay in Richmond in the hope of finding Norcross if Libby survived the city's destruction? Should she go on to Washington as she had planned if she did not find her lover in Richmond? Could she get to Washington? Everybody seemed to be going South and all trains were moving that way.

At the depot she found a frenzied mob pushing, pulling and trampling. Undecided how to proceed, weary and bewildered, she pushed her way through the crowd to a corner piled high with baggage of every kind, one side of which made a back wall for the outside platform. Here on a valise pushed sideways in between two piles of trunks, she sat to get her breath and think, if she were able.

Scarcely was she seated when a familiar voice reached her ear from the outer platform.

"You are certain he is not in Richmond?" The voice was that of Bresler. Keen now, Ann Leuin listened. It was Captain Cole who said, "Positively. He escaped and was never recaptured."

"When I took the oath that for the wrong he had done me, he should *pay*, I took it Bresler fashion. I shall not consider the score paid until I *know* he is dead and nothing can divert me from my purpose."

"Not even the cost—in gold? Ten thousand. You thought to save your gold by coming here to Richmond and yourself finding him in a mad cell—eh, friend Bresler? Will you now go farther?"

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“ I go back to Mobile on the first train. You can take the trail.”

“ I can take the trail. Yes. This trail means ‘Danger—danger—yes, *danger*’.”

“ If I had shot and stabbed and hanged as many Union soldiers as you say you have, I would not whine about ‘Danger!’ But that’s neither here nor there. You have the code—the A.L.L. oath of fidelity she wears in her ring. Other signs may fail but if you run across this code, you are on the track.”

“ And the gold—the ten thousand? ”

“ I’ll give you the damn gold *when* you bring me proof that Norcrosse is dead—*dead*—and I don’t care—”

Further listening was made impossible by the sudden moving of the trunks. But Ann Leuin no longer believed Del Norcrosse was in Libby.

CHAPTER II

“ WHO KNOWS? ”

ANN LEUIN arrived safely in Washington by boat.

As she started to the War Department she stopped on the street to notice for a moment the Stars and Stripes waving the message that the Union had survived the war against it.

The easy, graceful swing of the loyal emblem against the cloud-flecked blue sky seemed for the moment to bring rest and security to the tired mind and body of the girl. But a short time before she had seen the emblem of the seceded Southland go down to ashes and ruin. What if this Mother Flag of the Western Republic should go down? What if the divided forces had warred upon each other until both had been exhausted and some strange conquering power should rise with a strange emblem? She shuddered at the very thought and turned her attention to a group of soldiers standing around a brass band playing patriotic music.

Continuing her walk she passed the White House, moving slowly, her mind going back to the one wonderful, brilliant reception she attended when she had been presented to President Buchanan and his charming niece Miss Harriett Lane. Mrs. Jacob Thompson chaperoned a bevy of southern rosebuds that day. How gay they were! How lovely! And how splendid and gracious the ladies of her acquaintance were—Mrs. Sidell, Mrs. Senator Toombs, Mrs. Ogle Tayloe—the Riggess and scores of others. She could see yet the charming Countess de Sartiges and Lord and Lady Napier. How changed it all was now, since the Black Republicans were at the Government's head. A letter from a friend before she left home said, “ How metamorphosed and sad are conditions at the White House. Society is degraded beyond

THE SOUL OF ABE LINCOLN

belief. The ensemble of the personnel is more befitting that of a restaurant than the House of the President. Old Abe tells coarse and senseless stories over which he guffaws while his wife simpers. It is said on one occasion he greeted one of those indescribable Westerners that infest the White House saying, 'Howdy! Howdy!' as he clasped the toil grimed hand in his big, bear-like paw and shook it heartily. Almost past belief! Yet it must be true! "

With a sigh Ann Leuin hurried on. After a wait of several hours at the War Department she was dismissed and told to return the next morning to find out what, if any, news could be given her.

Back on the street her thoughts turned again to the time she had visited Washington. As she walked a thought came to her. There was a place of rest and quiet even in this war worn city. She was sure—quite sure—that in the mellow light of St. Aloysius she could find peace for a time at least. The impression of its remoteness from all things worldly that always came to her when she remembered kneeling with the devout and beautiful Mlle des Londes, with whom she attended Mass on her former visit to Washington revived like a lost fragrance. Hither she turned her steps.

Nor was she mistaken. Her first impression in stepping from the sunshine of an April afternoon into the church was that of entering the deep shade of a canyon where rare flowers grew if one could search them out. But her eyes soon adjusted themselves and all was clear, the altar, the aisles, the pews and high above, the holy flame that burns by day and night in every land.

A lady and two girls in the pew in front of her knelt in devotions. Almost without hesitation Ann Leuin knelt also, it seemed the thing to do. But her mind was not turned as much toward the Holy Virgin as to Del Norcrosse. He was in great danger. In this place of prayer she would pray for him. Then a second thought came. Del Norcrosse

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was in danger. In addition to praying she would warn him. Someway connected with his danger was the code word of their fealty each to the other. Possessed with the sudden desire to write she took from her bag a small sheet of paper and a pencil and while yet on her knees wrote, softly and slowly, "Dear, dear Del: I am on my knees in Washington thanking God you are not in a mad cell in Richmond. 'All is All'—and will be always, whether you are dead or living. Just now I feel you live—the plot against you is so real—so determined—so devilish—there must be those who know of your whereabouts. Take warning—solemn warning. Beware of the code. If, through the dangers and losses of war you have kept it for luck, destroy it at once for safety. Hope hangs on this. The old oath 'For this you shall pay' still lives."

Without signing the writing, she arose. The woman and two girls who had been kneeling had just turned into the aisle. When they reached the vestibule the woman dipped her fingers in the font of holy water and outlined the cross over her breast.

Ann Leuin looked at her face. A kind, motherly face it was with large clear eyes. Just now it was a happy face—radiant with the joy of her faith.

Not happy, however, was a weeping woman who accosted her.

"Faith, Mrs. Surratt, and its anaither iv me bhoys that they've kilt—kilt him inthirely they did!" and her sobs were pitiful.

Mrs. Surratt put her arm across the bent shoulders and patted the trembling body.

"An' it's all me bhoys they'll be gittin' at last—at last for th' baste in th' President's house thinks no more iv killin' good, whole souled lads than he does iv walkin' on worms! Th' baste!"

"He will not always be there—will not always be the President."

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“ An’ hasn’t he just got back agin fer anither four years? Four years! Arrah—the spalpeen! Not a whole bodied bhoy will there be lift at th’ end iv anither four years!”

“ But he may not be there four years—don’t cry so hard—he may not.”

“ What’s to hinder, Mrs. Surratt? What’s to hinder? ”

“ Who knows? ” was the reply.

“ Who knows? ” Over and over the words repeated themselves in Ann Leuin’s mind as she left the sanctuary of St. Aloysius.

CHAPTER III

FATHER CHINIQUEY

THE information Ann Leuin finally obtained from the War Department was a name, Captain Delmar Norcrosse; a date, a number and some marks she did not understand. This she was told to present to a certain department in a certain hospital. She had not known her lover as a Captain. Yet the name—surely it could be no other.

It was dusk before she left the War Department. Another night must intervene before she could proceed with her search—and how feeble the thread she worked on. She counted the hours. At one time she seemed to be near, quite near Del Norcrosse. She would see him in the morning! Then, next minute he seemed to be lost—lost forever—dead—buried, as she would later learn from Uncle Honey.

Yet did she believe him dead? Surely not—else why would she have sent a note of warning post-haste through his uncle? How her head ached with confused thinking and her heart ached with unsatisfied longing.

At the hospital the next day there was another delay and then a disappointment. The office of inquiry had been moved to another building. Again she must wait—through a still long night and perhaps hours at the next place of inquiry.

In this last hospital, as in the others, the stillness of her night vigils gave place to hurry and seeming confusion. Ambulances unloading; the dead wagon moving; there were the usual sights, sounds and odors of the sick, dying and dead. Visitors came and went, mothers, fathers, sisters, lovers perhaps, now and then a clergyman. Often a woman bearing a basket of delicacies and a colporteur with Bibles.

But among them all, and up and down the wards there moved sweet-faced, black-robed women whose rosaries tinkled faintly like far silver music as they swung from their

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belts to the motion of soft walking. Sisters of the Holy Cross they were, and among all the sisterhoods of devoted women who went to serve the sick and dying, none were more beloved. At their head was Sister Angela—"Angel" she was called. But to the bed-ridden soldiers every black-robed figure was an angel and the little white points turned back from their caps were wings.

After waiting and watching three hours, during which time Ann Leuin had not seen a familiar form or face, she caught sight of a heavy-set man in priestly garb, who stopping at the entry desk to speak, came into the waiting room and sat down opposite her.

As he sat down Ann Leuin felt her blood run quick in glad recognition. And yet who was he? Where had she seen him? Had she ever seen him? At school? Lectures and speakers had often talked before her. At some reception—perhaps the President's? Surely not there. Traveling? She could not remember. Was it since she had left home she had seen him somewhere? Vainly she struggled to recall. As she tried to concentrate to a point forcing remembrance, he removed his hat. With the change another face than his came to her—the face of an aunt whose home was in Canada. And the two faces looked at her from two pages in an album with a plush diamond on the cover and a heavy gilt clasp. How clear the pages were—even to the forget-me-nots that grew out of looped up stems over the top. How plain the brass clasp sounded as it snapped shut!

Now she knew. Yet could it be Father Chiniquy—the good priest her mother so loved and honored? For a moment she hesitated. Then with beating heart she crossed the room to his side.

"Pardon me, sir—but are you—can you be Father Chiniquy?"

As one arousing from a dream or deep thinking he hesitated a second. She did not speak again in words, but here eager eyes repeated the question.

"Yes, yes my child. Father Chiniquy."

"And may I call you 'Father'?"

FATHER CHINIQUEY

"Ten thousand have called me 'Father.' Why not you?" he answered smiling broadly. "But who are you, my child—and what can I do for you?"

"I am Ann Leuin Laury."

"Leuin? Leuin?" He knit his brows. "Leuin," and he scanned her face with keen eyes. "Leuin?"

"It was my mother's name when you knew her—back in Canada."

"In Canada? Where? Was she a communicant of my church?"

"No, her sister was."

"Montreal did you say—at the Cathedral of Montreal?"

"Not Montreal—a small place."

"Ann Beauport? St. Hyacinthe? Longueuil?"

"That's it—Longueuil! My aunt lived there. She attended your church—my mother with her."

"Leuin—Ah, I remember! I remember, bless you! That was after I came out of the monastery of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. I remember! So you are her daughter?"

He grasped her hand and shook it warmly. "But you—how did you know me?"

"In our best album my mother keeps your picture and so often has she told us about you, you do not seem to be a stranger."

"Stranger? No, not to anyone, leastways to a child, a child away from home. Did not your mother go to the far South?"

"Mississippi."

"You are indeed far from home."

"Yes, Father Chiniquy, far from home and almost at the end of a long sad quest for a loved one."

"Perhaps I can help you."

"If you only could!"

"I am here on a matter of business. Wait, I will return," and he crossed the room to the office.

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As she waited Ann Leuin seemed to have lost a load. Whether or not it had gone on to the broad shoulders of her clerical friend she did not consider. Eagerly she awaited his return. When he came she told him her story. It changed to an appeal at least in tone and eye expression as she said, "Do not think me disloyal to my beloved Southland because I love one who did not put on the grey. For my native land, for its just and holy cause I would give my life and I hate—*hate* that which would crush us. But love is stronger than hate. Love—oh, love does not dress in either blue or grey. It wears white that shines—and leads me on. I *must* go on and find him."

"And he is lost?"

"As lost as if he were dead. Lost, sir—lost!"

"I will take you to the President. He can do with a scratch of his pen more than you can do in a year to find this lost loved one."

"The President!" It was an exclamation of surprise and her face took on a look of scorn and dignity. "Abraham Lincoln?"

"President Lincoln."

"You would have me ask of him a favor? My brother lies under the torn sod of some forsaken battle field. My mother's heart is broken forever. My father's proud body is mutilated and his once kind heart embittered until it is like a stone; my childhood home has been stolen by cowardly Union sword bearers. And Mammy—even our dear old Mammy had to be shot dead and this because of *him*! Ask a favor of him?"

"Go to the President with me. He is my friend. He will not despise you because your people in an evil hour have lifted their hands against the Government he has sworn to protect. He is a strong help in time of need. For his sake whom you love can you not forget to judge one you do not know? Our President's heart is as you say of love, neither grey nor blue, but beats in love for all. Many

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have thought him an enemy, who have come to know him as a very precious friend."

"I cannot imagine anything changing my opinion of him unless it should be death. It changed Mammy's notion. She called him 'Ol' Mars Linkum,' and she hated him when I left home and until she entered the Valley of the Shadow. Perhaps death brings with it a great flood of love—the kind that makes us love our enemies."

"Death to preconceived and cruel judgments always brings its saving flood of love, my child."

Ann Leuin stood a moment in silence. She lifted her eyes to the kindly face studying her and said, "You are so good—so wise! For *his* sake—for him I love and have lost—I will go to see the President."

CHAPTER IV

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

THE trees making a leafy avenue at the west side of the President's house were planted by the hand of John Quincy Adams. Striplings of trees then, they had reached stately middle life when Abraham Lincoln walked beneath their shade as he took his burdened heart daily to and from the War Department.

Like friends tried and true the trees always stood, but it was at evening time when the President walked alone that the sympathy and understanding so widely withheld by humankind came to him from the kindly drooping limbs that sometimes touched him gently with their soft moving fingers, while with the massive trunks, gaunt and sombre in the twilight shadows he felt a kinship.

There were rare days when his familiar figure was not seen taking the daily walk, rainy days, and days when the Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States was crushed under a burden of responsibility too heavy for physical effort to sustain.

On an April evening when a mist hung over the night and the slanting leaves drooped heavy with gathering moisture which they shed in drops, the President sat alone. Mrs. Lincoln with the little son Tad was in Philadelphia. He had just wired her to stay as long as the visit gave her pleasure. No fresh news had come from the War Department. The long strain of war agony that had chiselled his brow and deepened the furrows on his cheeks had somewhat lessened since the evacuation of Richmond. The beginning of the end was in sight, and the President, after his super-human strain of fratricidal war, was beginning to know the rest of relaxation.

On this misty April night as he sat alone his mind took one of those strange swift flights back to scenes far from

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the present with its pain and problems. Fond of simple music he had enjoyed the singing of the Hutchinson family. Several times he had heard them, once at a hospital and once at a reception in his own White House. Both times they had sung "Rock Me to Sleep." He had been especially moved by the singing though he remembered little of either melody or words. Of the latter, these came to his mind—

"Backward, turn backward, O time in your flight
Make me a child again—just for tonight.
Many a summer the grass has grown green
Blossomed and faded our faces between.
Yet with strong yearning and passionate pain
Yearn I tonight for thy presence again.
Come from the silence
So long and so deep—
Rock me to sleep, mother,
Rock me to sleep."

But it was not the tender memory of a mother the words brought to him. Through the mist of vanished years he saw a fair face framed in golden hair with a glint like that of the setting sun. He saw eyes—eyes luminous with some unquenchable and glorious light—eyes that smiled into his being. And out of the long, sealed silence he heard again a voice that set his soul strings all aquiver with the ecstasy of pain and joy.

"Then there will be quiet times, perhaps lonely times, when apart from all the world you will feel a gentle tugging at your heart. It will be the soul of Ann Rutledge saying, 'I do not want to be forgotten.' And when your eyes are too dim with tears or age to see other faces than those of the long past, you will hear her voice who has been sleeping under the grass for fifty years—the unforgetting love of Ann Rutledge, as strong and fresh as when she shouted on the heights and gave herself to you—dear, dear Abraham!"*

What was it? Had he seen? Had he heard? Had the mist of the silence and the unknown been drawn aside for one brief moment? Or was it an upward flight of the sub-

* *The Soul of Ann Rutledge*, p. 282.

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conscious into conscious memory? Or was it nothing more than a notion born of long nerve tension? Was it real—or unreal?

Breathing as one does in supernormal moments following a weakening surprise, the President walked to the window and looked out into the mist where the substance of trees looked like phantom forms. He was called to a condition of normal thought by a knock at the door. A visitor would see him.

“ Who is it? ”

“ His name is Chiniquy.”

“ Chiniquy. I have an appointment with him in the morning.”

“ So he said, Mr. President, but he asks for a very few moments if possible. Something important.”

“ Let him come.”

The President took a look into the grey mist and shadows, dropped the curtain and turned toward the light. A moment later Father Chiniquy was asking permission to introduce a Mississippi girl for a very brief conference.

Ann Leuin's first impression of President Lincoln was that he and the Stars and Stripes were one, since he stood quiet as a dark statue where a handsome Union flag draped against the wall, made a background. As she stepped across the threshold he glanced toward her to see a slender girl in a blue dress falling in soft folds over a very small hoop skirt. On her head was a straw bonnet with pink roses and blue ribbons. His glance was casual—indifferent.

Not so the first glance of the daughter of Mississippi on the face of Abraham Lincoln—or rather the faces, for in a passing minute she saw two faces. The one cut in deep lines was bordered with a beard and hair dark as sable, a fitting pall for the eyes above it which had a Gethsemane expression as she entered the room. The second face, the homely, the pathetic, was metamorphosed by something liberated within which gave it such a glow as only radiates from illumined souls.

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"My good friend Father Chiniquy tells me you are in trouble about a lover."

"Yes, Mr. President—and Oh! Mr. President, if you knew what it is to love and to lose—you would help me!"

The President turned his eyes on her now in a scrutinizing manner.

"I mean, sir—of course you have loved for you have a wife, and men love their wives."

"You are right—men love their wives."

"But you have not lost."

The President was silent a moment. Then he said, "Would you mind laying your bonnet aside?"

Much embarrassed Ann Leuin hastened to untie her bonnet strings saying, "I beg your pardon, sir, I did not know it was customary for ladies to remove their head covering."

"It is not. I want to see your hair—if you don't mind."

"My hair! It is sadly mussed I fear. You see I wear curls. I always did at home, my father liked it better. I would have put it in a net but you know, sir, nets that cost fifty cents before you got up this awful war now cost fifteen dollars and I could not have one. Fifteen dollars would buy lots of milk for poor sick soldiers." She put her bonnet in her lap.

The President did not seem to have heard her speech. He looked at her in silence. Fearing she had displeased him she was thinking what she could say when he spoke.

"Pardon me," he said. "You make me think of a girl who had hair—golden hair. She was young and fair—like you. She had a lover."

"And did she lose her lover?"

"No—no, it was not that—she never *lost* him."

"He did not go away and leave her—I am glad."

"What is your name?"

"Miss Laury."

"I mean your little girl name, your home name. It wouldn't happen to be 'Ann' would it?"

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"Ann? Yes sir. My name is Ann Leuin Laury?"

"Ann—Ann," he repeated as if speaking to himself and turning to the window he drew back the curtain and for a moment looked again into the mist.

"Very well, little girl," he said turning back. "What can I do for you—for your lost lover?"

"Help me find him, sir."

"Who is he—some handsome Rebel officer? Some prisoner of war?"

"His name is Del Norcrosse. He is not a Confederate soldier, sir. He is on the Union side—but lost."

"Not dead is he?"

"No sir—that is, I *hope* not."

"Where did he live?"

"In Fredericksburg."

"Was he in the army?"

"He was, sir."

"In what capacity—where?"

"After a very brave deed done he was made a captain, sir."

"Where was he when you last heard from him?"

"He had just escaped from Libby."

"And you have not heard from him since?"

"A letter was written from a hospital here in Washington. But you see, sir, my father kept the letter from me. He feared I would run away to nurse him—a Union soldier, so he held the letter. Months before I got it, he was gone and his uncle in Fredericksburg was gone—so I lost him."

"What was he doing in the hospital—shot?"

"A hound tore his heel off as he was swimming a river and he had a sword wound also."

"A hound got his heel—ah-ha! Let me think! Yes, I remember. Yes, yes! So this is the young fellow you love and would have followed into a Union hospital."

"I love Del Norcrosse, sir."

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

" Norcrosse—Captain Norcrosse. I know, but I thought you Mississippi folks hated the Union and all Yankees."

" We do, sir."

" And yet you love a Union soldier? "

" Yes sir, for while we hate with all our hearts, we love with all our souls, and love is stronger than hate."

" You have spoken well. The young fellow—your lover, is a man to be proud of. Of course I remember him. Among three score wounded I spoke with that day, there was but one hound victim, a brave and loyal man."

" Thank you, sir—and I am glad you know him—and do you—oh, do you know, sir, where he is? It has been so long—so very long since I saw him or heard from him."

" No. I do not know where he is just now. But we have a way of finding out where valuable men are—sort of a fine comb system. If he is living I will find him."

" You will find him? *You, the President of the United States!* "

" Yes, I, the President, will find him for you. Here's my hand in promise."

He held his hand toward her. Ann Leuin gave him her fingers and for a moment the Belle of Mississippi only stared. Then the little hand was completely wrapped in the warmest, heartiest clasp she had ever known. His words had been kind, his eyes, his voice. But it was the hand clasp—the strong, tender, inreaching vibration coming through the hand that spoke to the girl's heart. Had there ever been in all the world—could there ever again be a hand clasp like it?

Ann Leuin dropped her eyes. When she raised them to the face of the tall, awkward man, they were brimming with tears which fell over her cheeks and her mouth quivered as she said, " Thank you—oh, thank you, sir! "

" Now look here," he said giving her hand another hearty pressure, " is this the way you Mississippi girls show your joy—the way Dixie sweethearts do when long lost

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lovers are about to be returned to their lonesome arms? ”
He laughed heartily like a man and not like a President.

Then, as a dropping tear fell on his hand he said, no longer laughing—“Don’t cry little girl—don’t do it.”

“ I’m not,” she sobbed. “ I’m telling you something.”

“ Telling me something? ”

“ I’m telling you you are not like—you are not like—what I thought you were. Forgive me for being mistaken and let me say ‘God bless you, sir!’ ”

“ I am already blessed—because tonight I have seen—have met you—*Ann*. Be here at ten o’clock, Saturday morning, April 15th.”

When Ann Leuin left the White House her heart was full of singing as her lips repeated over and over, “Saturday morning at ten o’clock! The President has promised! God bless him—God bless him! ”

CHAPTER V

"PAY DAY LATER"

IF Bill Rixse was surprised at the clever manner in which the Sons of Liberty had planned to appropriate the twenty thousand dollars to be disbursed for the Sanitary Commission, his eyes opened as did those of Aladdin when he rubbed the magic lamp, when he heard of the two million dollars being disbursed from Canadian headquarters of the Sons of Liberty. This immense amount was said to have been captured from a United States paymaster on Red River in Louisiana. From Montreal it was sent out to pay for the organization, arming, drilling and other necessary expenses of the Order.

Through information received, the Government saved its twenty thousand, but Bill Rixse knew nothing of the two million dollar steal until it began to come to him in small quantities.

But if Bill Rixse, supposedly faithful henchman of the Order had not been able to prevent this gigantic steal, he was able to collect evidence of it and this together with papers and documents and first hand proof which he himself was able to give, was being woven by him into a net in which were to be caught the leading officers of the Order and by the police-arm of the Federal Government dragged before its tribunal.

As the finishing touches were being put on the net-weaving, among the callers one day at the blind office of the Order was a trim young Confederate officer.

Through his smoked glasses Bill Rixse gave him a keen, swift look. Then springing from his chair he stepped forward with extended hand saying, "Captain Cole—ah, I know you, Captain," and Bill Rixse laughed a deep-chested salutation.

"You have the best of me," the Confederate said as he held his hand and they exchanged the grip of the Order.

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“ Ha—maybe so! Indeed. To be sure. There was but one Captain Cole that night and a dozen of us guerillas! Why should *you* remember *me*? ”

“ Guerillas? What night was that? Where? ”

“ Remember a night about two—two and a half—maybe three years ago down in the Blue Ridge country you came across a band of guerillas who had a fellow with hemp around his neck? He gave you a code letter or something he said was a message for Richmond. You took it. Remember that night? ”

“ I do. So you’re one of those guerillas? ”

“ I say I am,” and Bill Rixse took his letter from his pocket and let Captain Cole read it.

“ Well, this is a pleasure! So you were there that night? Do you remember I told you boys at the time that the fellow was a damn Yankee spy? ”

“ I recollect, sir, every word.”

“ I was right. His name was Del Norcrosse, a most daring and dangerous man.”

“ Del Norcrosse—well. What became of him? ”

“ That’s what brought me here. They tell me you have a good system of discovering men who are an especial menace to the Order. This Del Norcrosse, if living, is one of the most dangerous characters we have to reckon with. I took him to Libby. You remember the fix he was in, bleeding like a stuck hog, unconscious, dead seemingly. Well, I loaded him on the flat car with other Yankee cattle. Half of them were dead or dying when they got to Richmond. Most of the rest died sooner or later. I supposed this infernal Yankee spy was one of them. But it seems he wasn’t. He escaped with that lot of Yankee officers that dug a rat hole under the walls. I heard he had been recaptured—a few of them were—and was in a mad cell at Libby. This was good enough. But investigation shows he was never returned to Libby. He went from Libby to some other hospital or to his home in Fredericksburg. Now I am on his trail—will find him dead or alive if it takes years.”

“ Fredericksburg? Did he live there? Virginia didn’t

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furnish so many Union spies. He should have come from Ohio or the East."

"No, from Fredericksburg. I know a fellow who knew him intimately. He has given me some valuable tips."

"Oh—you know a friend of his?"

Captain Cole laughed as he said, "Friend? Well not exactly. Unless a desire to know him dead is the test of friendship."

"Ah—an enemy I take it," and Bill Rixse laughed in a deep-chested and comfortable manner. "Did this damn Union spy do him an injury?"

"My friend thinks so. It was about a girl—the Yankee took some kind of unfair advantage of my friend's sweetheart for which he will never be forgiven."

"I don't know who this friend of yours is—a soldier, maybe—but I hope if this dirty pup that escaped our noose that night did him a wrong, he will get satisfaction if the cur is living. And if there's anything I can do to help you find him, name it. Was your friend a soldier? Was it while he was away fighting for the sacred cause of the South this thing happened?"

"No—he wasn't a soldier. Everybody couldn't go to war. He has big mercantile interests in Mobile which he looks after."

"No, not everybody can bear arms. So he lives in Mobile? A good town. I've heard my father speak of a neighbor of his that moved down there and went into the importing business. His name was Bresler. I remember the name because a Bresler boy came back one summer to visit some cousins. He was a boy that had his own way pretty much if I remember correctly."

"Bresler—so your father knew old Bresler. Well, he's done well in Mobile. Bresler and Sons had a fortune before the war, but the war has been Mother Fortune to them. Thomas Jefferson Bresler is my friend. Likely he's the boy who you remember, sounds like him," and he laughed.

"Thomas Jefferson Bresler," Bill Rixse repeated. "A good name. What can I do to help you on the track of

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this cur that spoiled his love affair? Did the girl live in Mobile too? ”

“ Mississippi. ”

“ I see. Well, what can I do for you? ”

“ All I want is help in locating him. Then, by God, I can do the rest. ”

“ Yes—what we should have done three years ago when we had our hands on the rope. How are you going to shove him off this mortal coil? ”

“ By blade or leaden bullet, by strangulation cord or poison cup—what matters? The easiest way—the surest way—the safest way. The method is not the problem. Where will I find him and how shall I know him? ”

“ Where you will find him I cannot tell since you are not sure he is living. But I can tell you some good signs of identification. First, he will likely have but one leg. One of the hounds caught him in the water and tore half his foot off. From what you say of his condition it is likely he lost his leg. At any rate he will be lame. But since the world is full of lame men, you must have a surer sign. Look for a man with one ear. If he lost his leg he might be wearing a wooden one. But an ear cannot be strapped on like a leg or carried like a cane. ”

“ How do you know one ear is gone? ”

“ I whacked it off myself—likely trampled it into the dirt. If you could remember me you would recall that I stood to the last for hanging him as a spy. If I had believed his story I would not have cut his ear off. ”

“ A one-eared man, ” Captain Cole said. “ It’s likely he went into some hospital in Washington after he got away from Libby. Would you advise starting the machinery of our Order in the hospitals for a one-eared man? ”

Bill Rixse studied a moment before saying, “ You tell me this fellow’s home is at Fredericksburg? ”

“ Yes—Fredericksburg. ”

“ Has he a father—mother? ”

“ Haven’t discovered the family connection yet. ”

“ I would suggest an inquiry at Fredericksburg first. ”

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Feel around; find if he is there or has been. Meantime I will see what I can do."

The day after Captain Cole left, there came into Bill Rixse's office a tall stranger who, after staring at him in a unusual way said, "They tell me you are Bill Rixse?"

"That's my name, sir."

"What Bill Rixse are you?"

"This one—here," and taking out his worn letter he showed it to the stranger.

The man read it, turned it over, looked at it again, then fixed his gaze on Bill Rixse saying, "Either I'm crazy as a bat, or you're the biggest liar in Kentucky."

"Why so—how's that?"

"Bill Rixse was my brother."

"How do you know I am not your brother?"

"How do I know? By the way you look, by the way you talk."

"Don't I look and talk as I did when you last saw me?"

"No more than if you were another man."

"I am another man, my brother. No man can go through war, be shot, bleed and be nine-tenths killed as I was without changing his looks, shape, voice and all. The war did it, brother."

"But Bill Rixse, my brother, is dead. I got the record from Washington."

"A mistake. How can he be dead and buried when he stands before you?"

For a moment the stranger seemed puzzled. Then he said, "Let me see your right arm—the back side—just below the shoulder. There's a mark there—it was there when you were born. I'll know it."

"Can't you come in again? I'd like to show you that mark just to prove I am your brother. But I have a business appointment for this hour," and he looked at his watch. "Come back—say the first of next week."

For a few moments after the tall stranger left, Bill Rixse sat thinking. Was this the brother? If not who was he? Who had sent him there? Almost mechanically he

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unlocked a small drawer where private papers were kept, among them the code that had come to him through the unknown Union drummer boy. The papers were there including the card. But their disarrangement told him they had been handled. By whom? As he asked the question he heard a voice saying, "For this you shall pay!" so distinctly did it come and with so familiar a hissing sound, he turned quickly toward the window. But it was not the vine covered end of a porch and no enemy lay concealed outside. "Fair enough warning," he said. "Thank God my part is played! The game is in the bag. I'll away."

That afternoon Doctor Bowles arrived carrying an extra heavy satchel. He went to the Louisville Hotel and here he was arrested by Federal Officers to answer the charge of conspiracy and treason and confined in his room. Hearing of his arrest, plans were quickly made by the Order for his release. At eleven o'clock that night the guards were to be overpowered and the high officer and his valise of gold, which was a small portion of the two million dollars, were to be taken to a place of safety.

But when the posse of the Sons of Liberty arrived in front of the hotel, the street was found to be better lighted than usual. On looking up the street a section of artillery could be seen at Eighth and Main, fully manned and trained on the Louisville Hotel. Another, two blocks on the other side, manned and pointing, caused the posse to retire and Doctor Bowles was left to answer the charges.

A very few days later Grand Commander Dodge and two other head officials of the Sons of Knights of the Golden Circle, its last alias the Sons of Liberty, were in jail on the charge of treason and conspiracy.*

When Captain Cole made a surprise call at the office of Bill Rixse, he found a missive addressed to himself containing these words, "Pay day later. Advise Bresler. Norcrosse."

* For details of the arrest, trial, findings and sentence to death by hanging, of the leaders in this Order, see "Report of the Judge Advocate General on The Order of American Knights, alias The Sons of Liberty," published by Union Congressional Committee, 1864. This report gives purpose, plans, methods and actual operations of the treason conspiracy.

CHAPTER VI

MOSES ON NEBO

SPRING had come again on the Swan's Neck.

The crimson trumpet flowers on the garden house had opened their flame colored throats for the humming-bird's dip: venturesome bees tried their wings over early water flowers and button balls gave the fresh woods their delicate fragrance while the first whip-poor-will called in the gloaming.

As the silence of the vesper time fell over the lake, a man and a woman sat on the porch of the log house by the water side. The man wore grey and one empty sleeve was pinned across his breast. In a low chair near him the woman sat—a fair, frail woman whose dark hair was streaked with white like tiny ribbons woven through it.

“Easter is coming again,” the woman said.

“Yes—another Easter time,” and a sigh followed the words.

“I went up to the house today—to the graves on the hill slope. I wanted to see if the flowers I planted last Easter were growing. The Union officer kept his word when he said this sacred place should not be molested. It was lovely and green and Mammy's grave was covered with ‘Stars of Bethlehem.’”

“Stars of Bethlehem?”

“Yes—you know, the tiny white stars that come first after winter.”

“Why do they call them ‘Stars of Bethlehem’?”

“I suppose because they are such modest flowers. Bethlehem was a tiny place and humble. Perhaps because they come as proof of new life—new hope after a long winter, as Christ came to bring hope after the long winter of man's despair.”

“Whatever they mean, if it is a sentimental message, they could not find a better place to bloom than on the grave of your old black Mammy.”

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“ I thought of that. How often, oh, how often during these dark and dreadful years I have thanked God that it was Mammy instead of you—her life, instead of yours.”

“ Do you think she knew—knew the risk she took? ”

“ I am sure of it. She said so.”

“ Her passing brings to mind the words, ‘Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend’.”

“ She loved—such a wonderful love at the last, it wiped out all hatred—even that for the hated Lincoln. Do you remember? ”

“ I have not forgotten.”

There was a pause—a silence. Then Mrs. Laury spoke again.

“ I walked to the gate of the old home. The Union officers have been going away. It is almost deserted now. I walked to the steps—I stood there.”

Her voice quivered as she spoke and dropping her head against her hand while the sound of sobbing broke the evening hush.

“ What is it, Margaret—what is it, my dear? ” Judge Laury said, moving close to her.

“ I walked to the steps,” she said again, “I stood there. And as I stood I heard Gus singing, ‘You’ll Remember Me,’ O my husband! Gus—has gone. Ann Leuin has gone—we are alone. And the big house will soon be emptied—and waiting. If once again we could hear the children singing—laughing—this loneliness is killing me.”

Judge Laury took her in his arms. He did not try to speak but tears on his cheeks told what his heart felt. Brushing them away she said, “Don’t cry—let’s not cry. We still have each other—and maybe—”

She did not try to finish the sentence. Too often before she had hoped and tried to get from him some expression of changed attitude toward Ann Leuin.

“ How many chickens could George muster if we needed them for a special occasion—frying chickens? ”

“ Chickens? ” Mrs. Laury inquired in surprise. “What

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special occasion could we want chickens for, even if we had them?"

"We might want them for something like a wedding breakfast."

"Wedding breakfast! What do you mean? What can you be talking about?"

"Let's read Ann Leuin's letter again," was his answer.

With nervous eagerness Mrs. Laury went into the house, lit a candle, took the letter from the mantel and together they read:

"Just time for a few lines, mother mine, before I leave Mobile for Richmond where I have heard my darling Del is confined in a maniac's cell. The long months I have been away from you caring for the sick and dying, I have been looking, always looking, for him. Just now I have heard of him. I am setting out to find him, dead or alive. I shall never stop until I do. From Richmond I am going to Washington—will be there within a few weeks and expect to stay until the last record has been examined. Perhaps I will find Uncle Honey—unless he too is dead. Sometimes it seems to me everybody and everything I ever loved but you is dead—dead as my dear father's once warm love for his little Ann Leuin is. I am homesick, heartsick for my beloved Mississippi. But since Del Norcrosse cannot come, neither will I until his grave makes me a widow before I was ever a bride. Love and prayers for you, dearest of mothers, and for my father. Ann Leuin."

For what seemed a long time they bent over the paper. Handing it at last to Mrs. Laury, her husband said, "Tell George to scour the country for chickens, to put them in the old bear cages and fatten them. I'm going to start for Washington in the morning. And since our little Ann Leuin—God bless the hard-headed child—won't come without Norcrosse, I suppose it must be a wedding breakfast."

"O my husband!" Mrs. Laury cried with a joy so wild it startled the night birds, "I haven't been so happy since the war began—so happy—so happy!"

When Del Norcrosse delivered to General Baker at

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Secret Service headquarters the mass of evidential matter he had secured while acting as an officer in the Sons of Liberty, his achievement was the occasion of both praise and pay. But it was the receipt of a couple of letters waiting for him at this office that lifted him away from the world of detective achievements into the realm of bewildering speculation and ecstatic hope.

The first letter was written from the White House and signed "A. Lincoln." It advised him to be in the Executive Office at ten o'clock on Saturday morning, April 15th, on a matter of utmost importance.

What could this mean? What could the President want to see him about? His Secret Service work? Surely not this as he could not have heard of it. He wondered, but even this excitement was small in comparison with news the next missive contained. The letter was addressed by his Uncle Honey, but inside was a smaller envelope bearing his name in the handwriting of Ann Leuin Laury. The brief note was the one she penned in St. Aloysius. In Washington—somewhere near—she had written to warn him—if he lived—to let him know she yet loved him—if he lived—to tell him "All is all"—fresh as when she had whispered it in the big tree by the canebrake. In Washington! The city was not big enough for her to remain long lost in if she were still there. He would start at once and hunt her—perhaps before night he might hold her in his arms. A note from his Uncle Honey in the larger envelope saying he would be in Washington within the next few days was overlooked in the first moments of excited pleasure and meant little when he read it. Just now he would have no time for Uncle Honey, no time for anything until Ann Leuin was located.

He was called back to the Secret Service world by General Baker who was saying, "You need a vacation after this work, but you really must do us a little further service of a most important nature. Threats have been made against the life of the President. Indeed so persistent are the rumors of plans for the taking of his life that under General

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Augar all roads leading from and into Washington are closely guarded. Of course, we have an extra number of plain clothes men on duty but you, Captain Norcrosse, have proven yourself worth the entire force. Do not put yourself on any nerve strain nor wear any disguise. Walk about—listen—look. You can do this? ”

“ I intend to, sir—intend to.”

“ Ah—I was sure an appeal to you to help assist in the protection of our great and good Lincoln would not be unfruitful.”

“ Is it a fact, or is it rumor that his life has been threatened? ”

“ It is fact—fact. It came to me straight from no less reliable source than our Ambassador to Italy when he heard of the plot. Professor Morse brings the same news.”

“ Italy? A plot being made in Italy to take the life of President Lincoln? ”

“ Abundant proof has been given of it.”

“ But why in Italy—what interest has Italy in our affairs? ”

“ That’s what I have asked myself? Professor Morse says there has been a long-time plot to destroy the liberty of our Republic and I’ll admit indications point that way.”

“ Has this plot anything to do with the Secret Treaty of Verona—that is, does it seem to be coming from the autocratic powers that framed the Verona Treaty and set forces in motion for the accomplishment of its purpose? ”

“ I don’t know anything about the Secret Treaty of Verona. All I know is that plots for taking the life of Lincoln have been uncovered, and as far away as Italy. What we want to do is to protect him, and if by any lucky chance you should be able to get on the trail of any plot or plotters in Washington, your crown of glory would not be big enough to hold its stars of achievement.”

Norcrosse laughed. Then he said, “Did you ever put a man on the trail of the conspiring three with headquarters at 604 H Street, N.W.? ”

“ Yes, but we never got very far with it. Found John

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Surratt worked for the express company a month and never went back for his money. He is a blockade runner, an underground messenger between Richmond and Canada, I think. Weischmann is still in the Government office and rated as a Union man. We have no evidence otherwise, but my opinion is he has been giving out information. The war is practically at an end, yet much may be discovered in a short time for beaten forces grow reckless. No nerve-racking work—no danger. Just walk about—look—listen.”

“ You speak my plan exactly. I leave here to walk about—to look—to listen—and I assure you sir, no man ever entered a task with keener interest nor more determination.”

“ Thank you—I shall expect results—good luck.”

“ Before I leave—has the President had warning of the plots against his life? ”

“ I myself have warned him several times, but seemingly with no effect and I think others have warned him.”

General Baker was correct in his statement that the President had been fully warned of a plot to take his life, but he did not know at that time that one of those who gave warning was a priest who claimed to be in possession of facts obtained nearer home than Italy.

It was Father Chiniquy, whose devotion to President Lincoln dated back to a court room in Urbana, who gave him the fullest, most direct warning, his voice choking as he looked into the face of the President and told what had come to him.

The President was perfectly calm. “ I will repeat to you,” he said “ what I told you in Urbana, ‘ man must not care where and when he will die provided he dies at the post of honor and duty.’ ”* You are not the first to warn me against the dangers of assassination. My ambassadors in Italy, France and England as well as Professor Morse, have many times warned me against the plots of murderers they have detected in those different countries. But I see no other safeguard against those murderers but to be al-

* *Chiniquy Autobiography—Fifty Years*, p. 706.

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ways ready to die as Christ advised it. As we all must die sooner or later, it makes very little difference to me whether I die from a dagger plunged through the heart or from inflammation of the lungs. Let me tell you that I have lately read a passage in the Old Testament which has made a profound impression on me."

The President took a Bible and opened it at the third chapter of Deuteronomy where Moses from the mountain heights saw the Promised Land. "'I pray thee, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon,'" the President read "'Get thee up unto the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward and northward and southward and eastward and behold it with thine eyes, for thou shalt not go over this Jordan'."

After the President had read he said, "My dear Father Chiniquy, I have read these strange and beautiful words several times these last five or six weeks. Peace—sweet peace, that choicest gift of the love of God is at hand. How my heart and soul have hungered and prayed for peace. Yet the more I read these lines, the more it seems they were written for me as well as for Moses. At the end of this terrible, this cruel war conflict with the same joy Moses knew when at the end of his trying forty years in the wilderness, I pray God to grant me to see the days of prosperity and peace, that untold prosperity that will follow this cruel war, as Moses asked to enter the Promised Land. But something tells me it is not to be."

"But my dear Mr. President—to die is different from being cut down by an assassin in the dark. Why should this be?"

"It comes of giving liberty to the forces which only use it for their own dark ends. Till lately I have been in favor of unlimited liberty for every man as our constitution seems to guarantee. But is it not an act of folly to give absolute liberty of conscience to a set of men who are sworn to cut our throats the very day they have their opportunity for doing it? Is it right to give the privilege of citizenship to men

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who are the sworn enemies of our constitution, our laws, our liberties and our very lives? Is it not an absurdity to give to a man a thing which he is sworn to hate, curse and destroy? Sooner or later the people of the Republic must put a restriction on the exercise of liberty turned toward the destruction of that from which it came. . . . But this is the problem of another generation. Just now the great work is to bind together in the bonds of sympathy and common weal the sisterhood of states that the Union may be one of hearts and hands and hope as well as of states.

"I pray God, my dear President, that you may live to do this work."

President Lincoln smiled as he said, "But you do not think I will. Who knows? As I sailed down the James a few days ago returning from Richmond, these words came to me which twice over I repeated as Charles Sumner will remember—

'Duncan is in his grave;
After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing
Can touch him further!'

And last night I saw the ship sail. I never mentioned this ship to you—a strange ship that sails on a mysterious sea. I have seen it many times and always just before some eventful change, and I am always in it. Before the battles of Bull Run, Antietam and Gettysburg I saw it. Seemingly it comes from nowhere and goes very rapidly to an indistinct shore. What it means, who knows? "

"May I pray with you before I bid you adieu? " Father Chiniquy asked.

"Indeed, I should thank you for a prayer."

The two knelt. The priest prayed—more with tears and a choking voice than with words. When they arose the President said smiling, "It wasn't so bad for Moses on Nebo after all. He saw the Promised Land—saw enough to make him know God's plan was working out. So have I seen—so *do* I see."

There was a benediction, a last silent handclasp.

The priest was gone.

CHAPTER VII

GOOD FRIDAY

It was on April 9th, that General Robert E. Lee, as big and fine a soul as God ever fashioned for human destiny, handed his sword to the victorious Grant, who proved the largeness of his soul by refusing to take the trophy of the vanquished.

Peace! Peace! Could it be! Were the weapons of warfare cast aside? Was the bloodletting stopped?

A nation, North and South, East and West, lifted its voice in thanksgiving for peace—peace—just peace!

Washington was in a fever of glad intoxication. Flags were everywhere added to the number that had fluttered through war days. There were lights in every house—music—singing—shouting—laughter—prayers—praise!

When ever had such preparation been made for Easter—the celebration of the resurrection from the dead of the Prince of Peace? The hills and dales of Virginia were clothed in green and verdure spread the banks of the Potomac while everywhere the Judas and the dogwood flung their pink and white dressed arms to the sunshine. Wild plums in the thickets and lilacs in the door-yards breathed a fragrance more sweet and meaning than was ever known before and jonquils glistened under foot like stars come down from heaven in glad celebration.

The approaching Good Friday was to be celebrated in keeping with the all-pervading joy and thanksgiving. Most important was to be the patriotic celebration at Fort Sumter for this, the anniversary day of the surrender of Fort Sumter in 1861 by Major Anderson, had been designated by the Government as the day on which the same officer should again raise the American flag upon the fort. For the religious the churches were open and Masses were sung to devout congregations. For those who would shop

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the stores were gay and already pervaded with the spirit of peace time. For the amusement loving the shows were open. Among the theatres of the city, the most popular was Ford's. Before the war the building had been a Baptist church. It was purchased by John T. Ford and converted into a first-class place of amusement. On Good Friday night the popular actress Laura Keane, who had appeared one thousand times in *Our American Cousin*, was to be seen in this play at a benefit performance. Indications pointed to a packed house, especially when it became known that President and Mrs. Lincoln, with General and Mrs. Grant as their guests, would occupy a box.

On the morning of Good Friday, Del Norcross stopped in a stroll he was taking, opposite 604 H Street, N.W., thinking to watch the house a few moments and continue his walk.

His plans were changed, however, when he saw Weischmann, Booth and two ladies leave the house, and he turned his steps after them. As on a previous walk, he followed them to St. Aloysius. When the four came out of the church Weischmann * told Booth he had permission to attend as many religious services as he wished and he was going to continue Good Friday service at St. Patrick's. The two women said they would return home. Booth said he was going to the theatre. Weischmann and the elder of the two women held a whispered conversation before he left them.

Norcross had no desire to attend another service, so he decided to follow Booth to Ford's Theatre where the handsome young actor seemed to have free entry and where he received some mail which he looked over.

Norcross, with others, stood around waiting to purchase tickets. While he stood, the messenger came from the White House to secure the box for President and Mrs. Lincoln and their guests, the Grants. James R. Ford, business manager, was in the box office and gave orders for the reservation of the box. Another Ford brother superintended the decorations of the President's box,

* *Assassination of President Lincoln*, Oldroyd, p. 179.

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draping it in the front with flags, one of which was a handsome silk flag secured from the Treasury Department for this special occasion.

The surrender of Lee's army had been an absorbing topic for the past few days and Harry Ford, knowing Booth's southern sentiments, said to him, "John, the President has the State box tonight and is coming with General Grant to see the play and possibly General Lee will also be with them."

Booth started up angrily saying, "Never! Lee would not let himself be used as Romans used their captives, and be paraded!"

Ford laughed and told Booth he was only fooling him. Norcross watched Booth with interest and when the actor suddenly decided to leave, without having secured a ticket, Norcross followed him down Tenth Street and up E to the Kirkwood Hotel. Here Norcross lost him.

While advertisements were being sent to the papers announcing that the President and party would be at the theatre that Good Friday evening; while the box was being decorated—and while other preparations were being made about the President's box which were not to be known until after Good Friday night, the President himself was having a busy though restful day. In the morning at eleven he attended a cabinet meeting which was dominated by his kindly feeling, at which it was decided to restore to their old time place in the sisterhood of states, such as had gone apart for a time. Of General Lee's picture which Cabinet members had been looking at, the President said, "It is a good face—the face of a noble, brave man," and he expressed the wish that affairs might be so conducted that sectional hatred would be blotted out and finally relations made easy. After an interview with the young sculptor Vinnie Ream and a quiet luncheon he took a ride with Mrs. Lincoln and they talked of the time to come when he would be back at home in Springfield, a citizen, a man—not a war-time President.

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The hotels were filled to overflowing and the babel of voices sounded like confusion—a glad confusion for the war was over.

Among late entries at the Willard Hotel were James Honeycutt from Fredericksburg and Judge Laury of Vicksburg, Mississippi. Neither knew the other was nearer him than a thousand miles.

Judge Laury's arrival was marked by what seemed a peculiar incident. As he walked up the street toward the White House he heard a brass band playing "Dixie." His heart gave a leap of joy. His feet for the moment stopped in their tracks. He had come to Washington over which ten thousand emblems of the Union floated, the Union that had defeated the uprising among her sister states. Was he in Washington really? Did he hear? Or did his ears deceive him? Who could be playing "Dixie"—who allowed it? "Dixie" was the voice—the inspiration—of the South, the song of the Lost Cause.

Accosting a fellow-Confederate he said, "Whence come those strains? Can you tell me, sir?"

"Dixie? Our Dixie? That's the Marine Band."

"Marine Band, sir? Do they allow the Marine Band to play our war song here in Washington? Is the President asleep?"

The Confederate laughed as he said, "No sir—he's awake. That's the reason you hear Dixie. He called for it. He said it belongs to us all now, fairly—by capture. It belongs to the Union! and by God, sir—just hear it, sir!" and the grey-clad stranger began to tap his cane on the pavement and then to swing his leg as he said again, "By God—sir, hear it!"

"By the President's order? What kind of a man is he? I didn't know—I never thought—"

"I know you didn't, sir—we didn't any of us. I never would have, but I was taken prisoner—the President came my way—and well, sir—he shook hands with me and told me a story that set me laughing till my ribs ached. No

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sir—you didn't know—you never thought, sir—that's it—we didn't any of us know him. By God—hear that band play Dixie! ”

After Norcrosse lost Booth at the Kirkwood Hotel he turned back to the Willard hoping to find his Uncle Honey who was expected that morning. He was not disappointed.

Never in his life had he seen his uncle in such an exuberance of spirits. He seemed, since Norcrosse had last seen him, to have grown twenty years younger, his hand-clasp, his voice, his shining eyes—as he said, “Peace—Peace! How do you feel? ”

“ Like a four winged eagle—a golden eagle soaring too high ever to come down,” and Norcrosse laughed.

“ You had great success in your last work? ”

“ Very great success—just how great you will know very soon—today, perhaps. But it is not this success that has sprouted my eagle wings. It is the letter that came—the one you sent. It came from HER. And SHE is somewhere in Washington or was a few days ago. And I am going to find her—find her! Peace? It is great. But Ann Leuin Laury? ”

“ Is greater, I suppose,” and Uncle Honey shook the hand of his nephew saying, “I hope you find her—I'll help if need be. Is this news accountable for all four of your eagle wings? ”

“ No—the other two—a bit shorter, but fine uplifters, came out of this,” and he handed Honeycutt the note signed “ A. Lincoln.”

Before they had time to make comment on it, the quick eye of Norcrosse, ever searching, spied a straight grey figure standing apart and alone not far away.

“ Look! ” exclaimed Norcrosse to Honeycutt.

“ Judge Laury, on my soul! ” The words came quick. “ Come on.”

But no invitation had been necessary. The next minute Norcrosse was moving.

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"I beg your pardon, sir," he said to Judge Laury. "My presence may not be welcome, but I would face death itself to get news of Ann Leuin Laury—*my* Ann Leuin."

"And I, sir—I would be blind to the color of a coat to get news of Ann Leuin Laury. Where is she boy?"

"Ah—where is she, sir?"

"Here in Washington I hope."

"She is in Washington—I feel it. And I will find her."

"Yes—I will find her—may we not say WE will find her?"

Before Norcrosse had time to answer, his Uncle Honey came and seizing his old-time friend's one hand, he shook it heartily saying, "God love your soul—shake—the war is over."

"Would to God I had both hands to do it with," Judge Laury said, his face smiling, but his voice thick.

"Left it somewhere?" and Honeycutt tapped the empty sleeve.

"Yes—long ago."

"Well—you and the boy here can exchange notes. He left his foot in the jaws of a blood hound, my old friend. But he's able to get around."

"Let us not waste time—Ann Leuin—where is she?"

"I was thinking," Norcrosse said. "She is more likely to be at Ford's Theatre tonight than any place in the city. Let us get a box and some strong glasses and search the house for her face. The chances are we will find it. Then each of us can watch a door. We can't miss her."

After some discussion it was decided to attend the theatre, interest to this plan being added for Judge Laury as the stranger's description of the President had awakened a desire to see him.

When Norcrosse went to purchase tickets he made a discovery. All seats were sold and hundreds clamored for tickets. Yet not a box had been sold and there was no chance of getting one. Why was this? What on earth could it mean? Norcrosse asked himself a dozen questions,

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to none of which any answer came. No boxes for sale at any price.

He turned away from the theatre still determined to be present that night. But his intention to watch for Ann Leuin was changed. Uncle Honey and Judge Laury might watch. Norcrosse himself intended to stay around the office and rear stage and learn if possible why the boxes were to be empty.

With this end in view, while the throngs were entering at the front doors, Norcrosse loafed about the rear and watched.

CHAPTER VIII

LIGHTS OUT!

DURING the days Ann Leuin waited for Saturday morning at ten o'clock on April 15th, heaviness of time had lifted leaving only its slowness. And even this was a happy waiting time for just ahead—every day twenty-four hours nearer, she would have news of Del Norcrosse. The President had said so and such a profound impression had he made on her that she would as easily have doubted the sweetest promise of God as that of President Lincoln.

She spent a few days looking about Washington, one at the home at Mount Vernon which was in a dilapidated condition, but for which restoration plans were being made. She bought a new cotton dress for the warm weather which was coming and made it carefully by hand. But most of the time she stayed in her modest room and wrote letters. Long letters she wrote to her mother, Miss Cummins, Doctor Graham's mother and friends she had left in Mississippi and in them all she told of her visit to the White House.

Once Father Chiniquy came to see her and together they talked of the President, which gave them both pleasure.

Several times in her walks, after having seen the President, Ann Leuin had passed the White House and had longed to go in—just for a minute—only long enough to look at the President and see if she really remembered just how he looked—if her impression of him were real and true, or if it were half imagination after all.

When, therefore, she saw in twenty places in the Evening Star that President and Mrs. Lincoln would occupy a box at Ford's Theatre that night, she lost no time in hurrying to purchase a ticket.

With a young nurse in the house she went to the theatre early so that by no chance would she miss seeing the President enter. The flag-draped box showed where he would sit,

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the rocking chair exactly the place. The President's box consisted of two upper boxes on the right hand side of the house, thrown into one. The place was spacious and fitted with elegance and taste. The curtains were of fine lace and buff satin and showed off well against the dark, rich background. The seats were upholstered in velvet and the rugs were Turkish. The exterior was well lighted by a handsome chandelier suspended just outside the box.

From the empty box Ann Leuin turned her eyes to watch the hundreds and thousands filling the seats. Ladies in rich and gorgeous costumes; officers of the Army and Navy in full uniform; members of the Foreign Embassy in their national dress; prominent citizens; plain people; young people—all kinds of people. A myriad gas jets burning in clusters made the place bright as day. There was the scent of perfumes and of flowers. There was the babel of voices above which the strains of violins could be heard as the orchestra made ready for the opening. And over it all there was the saturating, vague wonder of victory—the victory of a Nation—the triumph of the Union—and peace.

It was late when the President and party entered. His coming was announced by the band which played "Hail to the Chief." Instantly the vast audience was on its feet shouting and cheering and waving handkerchiefs and clapping hands to all of which the tall man in the box under the flags smiled and bowed and smiled again upon the glad people.

With the others Ann Leuin shouted and cheered and waved her handkerchief and wondered if by any chance he would see her in the sea of faces—would remember her and that tomorrow morning she was to be with him? Saturday morning, April 15th, at ten o'clock. Over and over she said it. Just one more night before her and she would hear the President's voice again—would get news of her long lost lover.

The play which had begun before the arrival of the Presi-

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dent and party, and which had stopped during his entrance and reception, proceeded.

A number of times Ann Leuin looked from the stage to the flag-draped box. The President seemed interested in the comedy. Several times he laughed. Once he moved from his chair to put on his overcoat, as the house was a little chilly.

The acts and scenes of the piece*—one of those singularly witless compositions which have at the least the merit of giving entire relief to an audience engaged in mental or business excitements and cares during the day, as it makes not the slightest call on either the moral, emotional, aesthetic or spiritual nature—a piece (*Our American Cousin*) in which among other characters so-called, a Yankee, certainly such a one as was never seen, or at least like it ever seen in North America, is introduced to England with a varied fol-de-rol of talk, plot, scenery and such phantasmagoria as goes to make up a modern popular drama There is a scene in the play representing the modern parlor, in which two unprecedented ladies are informed by the unprecedented and impossible Yankee that he is not a man of fortune and therefore undesirable for marriage catching purposes; after which, the comments being finished, the dramatic trio make exit leaving the stage clear for a moment.

There was a pause, a hush as it were. At this period came the death of Abraham Lincoln.

Great as that was, with all its manifold train circling around it and stretching into the future for many a century in the politics, history and art of the New World, in point of fact, the main thing, the actual murder, transpired with the quiet and simplicity of any commonest occurrence—the bursting of a bud or pod in the growth of vegetation, for instance.

Through the general hum following the stage pause

* This description is by Walt Whitman, who was in the theatre when President Lincoln was assassinated.

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with the change of positions, came the muffled sound of a pistol shot which not one hundredth part of the audience heard at the time—and yet, a moment's hush—somehow, surely a vague, startled thrill—and then, through the ornamented, draperied, starred and striped space-way of the President's box, a sudden figure, a man raises himself with hands and feet, stands a moment on the railing, leaps below to the stage (a distance perhaps fourteen or fifteen feet), falls out of position catching his boot heel in the copious drapery (the American Flag), falls on one knee, quickly recovers himself, rises as if nothing had happened (he really sprained his ankle, unfelt then)—and the figure, Booth the murderer, dressed in plain black broadcloth, bareheaded, with a full head of glossy raven hair and his eyes like some mad animal's flashing with light and resolution, yet with a certain strange calmness, holds aloft in one hand a large knife—walks along not much back of the footlights—turns fully toward the audience, his face of statuesque beauty lit by those basilisk eyes flashing with desperation, perhaps insanity—launches out in a firm and steady voice the words, "Sic semper tyrannis!" and then walks with neither slow nor very rapid pace diagonally across to the back of the stage and disappears.

(Had not all this terrible scene—making the mimic ones preposterous—had it not all been rehearsed, in blank, by Booth beforehand?)

A moment's hush—clouds of white smoke—incredulous—a scream—a cry of murder—Mrs. Lincoln leaning out of the box with ashy cheeks and lips, with involuntary cry, pointing to the retreating figure, "He has killed the President!"

And still a moment's strange, incredulous suspense—and then the deluge! Then that mixture of horror, noises, uncertainty—the sound, somewhere back, of a horse's hoofs clattering with speed. The people burst through chairs—and railings and breaking them up—the noise adds to the queerness of the scene—there is inextricable confusion and

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terror—women faint—quite feeble persons fall and are trampled on—many cries of agony are heard—the broad stage suddenly fills to suffocation with a dense and motley crowd like some horrible carnival. The audience rushes generally upon it—at least the strong men do—the actors and actresses are there in their play costumes and painted faces with mortal fright showing through the rouge—some trembling—some in tears—the screams and calls—confused talk—redoubled—trebled! Two or three manage to pass water up from the stage to the President's box. Others try to clamber up—they want to see!

In the midst of all this the soldiers of the President's Guard, with others, suddenly drawn to the scene, some two hundred altogether, storm the house through all the tiers, especially the upper ones—inflamed with fury, literally charging the audience with fixed bayonets, muskets and pistols, shouting, "Clear out! Clear out! You sons of b——!"

Such the wild scene, or suggestion of it rather, inside the playhouse that night!

Outside, too, in the atmosphere of shock and craze, crowds of people filled with frenzy, ready to seize any outlet for it, came near committing murder several times on innocent individuals.

One such case was particularly exciting. The infuriated crowd, through some chance, got started against one man, either for words he uttered, or perhaps without any cause at all, and were proceeding to hang him at once to a neighboring lamp-post when he was rescued by a few heroic policemen who placed him in the midst and fought their way slowly and amid peril toward the station house.

It was a fitting episode of the whole affair. The crowd rushing and eddying to and fro, the night, the yells, the pale faces, many frightened people trying in vain to extricate themselves, the attacked man, not yet freed from the jaws of death looking like a corpse; the silent, resolute, half-dozen policemen with no weapons but their little clubs,

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yet stern and steady through all those eddying swarms, made indeed, a fitting side scene to the grand tragedy of the murder. They gained the station house with the protected man whom they placed in security for the night and discharged in the morning.

And in the midst of that night of pandemonium, of senseless hate, infuriated soldiers, the audience and the crowd—the stage—its actors and actresses—its paint pots—spangles—gas lights—the life blood from those veins, the best and sweetest of the land, drips slowly down and death's ooze already begins its little bubbles on the lips.

CHAPTER IX

CONSPIRACY IN FLOWER

CAUGHT in the crowd that thronged, surged, sobbing and cursing in front of the house across the road from the theatre where the President had been carried, Ann Leuin, with tightly clenched hands, prayed, "God—O my God—don't let him die! Save him—for Christ's sake—save the President!" Neither she nor hundreds of others who prayed and wept, knew that the night was far spent until the light of a new day dawned, nor did they mind the early morning drizzle, Saturday, April 15th.

Pushing her way toward the steps Ann Leuin watched and listened for news. At 6.30 o'clock she heard someone say, "Still failing and labored breathing." Just after the clock struck seven the whisper went around, "Symptoms of immediate dissolution." It was 7.22 the death of the President was announced.

With a cry that seemed to re-enter her soul and pierce it, Ann Leuin turned her face homeward and weak and shivering took refuge in her bed where she suffered such pain and disappointment as she had not before experienced.

It was Saturday morning, April the fifteenth for Norcross also. But he was too excited to think of that.

The evening before, while the crowd had been gathering and watching for the President and laughing at the play, Norcross had been watching the actor Booth from the time he left the National Hotel. When he handed his key to the clerk he advised him to be at Ford's that night if he wanted to see some splendid acting. Shortly after nine o'clock Booth led his horse from the stable to the back door of the theatre where it was left in charge of a man called "Peanuts" while Booth crossed the alley to a saloon, his order being "Brandy! Brandy! Brandy!" as he knocked the bar with his knuckles.

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It was not hard for Norcrosse to watch Booth so long as he stayed outside the theatre as there were a number of people gathered about. He saw nothing suspicious in the actions of the actor and was just about to go around to the front of the building where he could watch for Ann Leuin when there was a murmur of voices near the audience door and a voice that came from some inner place Norcrosse could not determine said, "Nine o'clock and forty-five minutes." These words were repeated from mouth to mouth until they passed the theatre door and were heard upon the sidewalk.

Norcrosse stayed. Soon, in the slightly raised monotone, the voice said, "Nine o'clock and fifty minutes!" This also passed from man to man until it touched the street like a shudder.

"Nine o'clock and fifty-five minutes!" said the relentless voice after the next interval, then came "Ten o'clock," and like a creeping thing the words passed from lip to lip.

Norcrosse looked at the by-standers. Who were they? What was the link of understanding? What did it mean?

After an interval the words sounded "Ten o'clock and ten minutes!" and at this instant the actor Booth appeared in the door of the theatre and the men who had repeated the time so faithfully scattered. Norcrosse had turned away with the others when his feet were stopped by the report of a pistol which seemed to come from the stage of the theatre. He faced about. While he yet stood, Booth dashed out the door, sprang on to his waiting horse and was away.

Then came the sounds of tumult and confusion above which rang the cry, "The President is shot!"

Inside half an hour Norcrosse was at Secret Service Headquarters.

"He cannot leave the city," General Baker declared of the assassin, "as all exit roads are heavily guarded. And if he should, how long will it take soldiers and a posse to get him? Set the wires working!"

But for once General Baker was mistaken. The roads

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were not guarded. For six hours, as was afterward discovered, all guards were called off and entrance and exit to and out of Washington possible for anybody. Nor could the wires be used, for within fifteen minutes after the assassination all wires around the city were severed except one secret wire to Old Point.

What was to be done? Norcross decided to accompany the officers who were going at once to 604 H Street, N.W.

To his surprise, he was met at the door by Weischmann who ushered them in where they met the ladies of the house. Booth had gone. John Surratt was nowhere to be seen and Weischmann immediately turned states evidence. He swore he was loyal to the Union, knew nothing of any plans or plots Surratt and Booth had made. But since he thought of it, their actions had been suspicious and he believed they had been keeping something from him. As to Mrs. Surratt, he had heard her say things he had not understood but which the assassination of the President explained. So eager was he to assist the Government in getting on the trail of the murderers and their plot, he asked to render service by telling all he knew, which assistance was accepted.

While the officers were yet in the house waiting for Mrs. Surratt to finish her prayers before she was taken into custody, in answer to a knock, a giant in the garb of a laborer was admitted. He carried a pick over his shoulder. When questioned he said he had come to see about digging a ditch for Mrs. Surratt. When Mrs. Surratt was asked if she knew him, she swore with her hand lifted to heaven she had never seen him and declared he must have come to kill her with the pick. The hands of the giant whose name was Payne, were soft and white and well cared for and there were toilet articles in his pocket. He was placed under arrest with Mrs. Surratt. And there were others added to the company who held meetings at the Surratt home now charged with conspiracy in the murder.

But it was news of the three birds that had flocked together—the ones who were fellow Sons of Liberty

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Norcrosse wanted to trace. One of them had turned on the others and made much of telling anything and everything he thought might add to his own innocence by piling up their guilt.

From the beginning Norcrosse had suspected the pious Weischmann of belonging to the Order and while he had not proven him by the grip and pass word as he had Surratt and Booth, reason told him Weischmann was as deep in the mud as they were in the mire of conspiracy. It was not, however, until he saw and heard Weischmann under cross examination on the witness stand in the conspiracy trial* he was convinced beyond a doubt. As he saw him then the words came to him as the actor Booth might himself have hurled them out—"From the extremest upward of thy head, to the descent and dust beneath thy feet—a most toad-spotted traitor."

From the clutches of the law Weischmann had saved himself. But where was John Surratt? Had he too escaped the city during the six hours the guards were off, or by some grip and pass word of some Son of Liberty on duty?

In the first fever of excitement none of these questions could be answered. All inquiry of John Surratt from those supposed to know his whereabouts brought the repeated affirmation that he had not been in Washington for two weeks. Later his movements became known.

John Surratt knew he was a marked man† and concealed himself all day after his mother's arrest in a wretched hovel in the outskirts of Washington which had been shunned even by the homeless beggar, since its last occupant had died of small-pox. When night came, his features hidden with a handkerchief bound over his forehead, he presented himself at the residence of a certain priest who had been one of his college classmates. The clergyman opened the door

**Lincoln Murder Trial*, pp. 62-65; *Trial of John H. Surratt*, Fisher.

† *Life, Trial, and Extraordinary Adventures of John H. Surratt, the Conspirator*. A correct account, p. 24.

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in person as he was going out, but shrunk back when he saw the well-known figure.

"You will not betray me," gasped Surratt. "On my soul I did not raise my hand against anyone."

"No matter whether guilty or innocent, you have sought my hospitality and I shall not betray you. But you must leave Washington."

"Such is my intention and I am well furnished with gold and greenbacks but a disguise is absolutely necessary."

"Go upstairs, lock yourself in the first room you see, and do not open it until you hear my knock; I shall return as speedily as possible."

Some time later Surratt heard the welcome rap and his friend entered saying, "I returned as soon as I could. You have no time to lose. You must escape or your life will be forfeited."

"But how? Everyone knows me in Washington."

"You must assume a clerical dress and green spectacles. In that wardrobe you will find all that you require."

Surratt hastily threw aside the suit in which he was then clad and donning the habiliments in the wardrobe would easily have been mistaken for a priest. A breviary and green spectacles completed the transformation; the coat was worn.

"I thank you a thousand times," said Surratt.

"I have not forgotten the service you rendered me. Farewell, may God prosper you. Be silent and quiet; above all avoid the society of priests. They will be sure to detect you if you have done evil. May God forgive you. If you are innocent, He will surely deliver you from all snares."

"But," said Surratt, "I have taken your clothes and spectacles; allow me—"

"Not a cent, not a cent," said the priest hurriedly.

A close embrace and they parted perhaps never to meet again. The door was locked. The priest then took the clothes left by Surratt, tore them to shreds and cast them singly into a fire kindled for the purpose. Then filling a

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pipe with strong tobacco, its fumes soon overpowered the scent of burning wool and every trace of the visitor thus disappeared.

“ If I have been wrong,” said the good man to himself, “ may our blessed Saviour pardon me ; perhaps John is not guilty and it is not for us to judge each other.”

From the home of the priest Surratt went directly to the railroad station and took a ticket for Baltimore where he was compelled to wait until ten o'clock the next day. He did not leave the depot where he obtained some slight refreshment, until he took his seat in the cars for Philadelphia. When he arrived here he repaired at once to an obscure hotel in the northern part of the city, and paid for a room in advance. The next day he penned the following letter, “ So far I am safe. Use the enclosed to make the cloth which I shall send you. Take the rest for charity.” A hundred dollar note accompanied this letter which was intended for the good priest.

Four days later John Surratt was in Canada.

Where he was concealed during the months he remained in Canada, how he disguised when he crossed the ocean and how he was discovered two years later as one of the Pope's Swiss Guards, Norcross heard at the trial of this Son of Liberty who, to save his own life or the secrets of the Order, let his mother be hanged when he might have saved her.

The third of the three, John Wilkes Booth, was the only one of the conspirators at first known to the public. Enormous rewards offered for his capture, dead or alive, stimulated extraordinary search and the public was informed a short time after the assassination that the actor had been shot in a burning barn. As none of the posse who captured and shot the actor had ever seen him, as the man who was shot protested to the last that he was not the man they were looking for, and as a fairly good account of later activities of the dead Booth were recorded,* room was left for doubt as to the identity of the man shot in the burning barn.

* *Escape and Suicide of John Wilkes Booth*, by Finis L. Bates.

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This doubt was increased by the conflicting statements as to the disposition of the body which the public was not allowed to see. Once he was buried near the old jail and a battery of artillery drawn over the grave to obliterate all trace of it. Once he was buried under a brick pavement in a room of the old penitentiary prison of Washington City from which spot he was removed to the Booth burying ground in Baltimore some years later. Again the body of Booth was taken off the steamer *Ide*, April 27, 1865, down the Potomac River, from the steamer it was placed on a boat by Captain Baker and his nephew and carried to an island twenty-seven miles from Washington and secretly buried there.

But the contrary contentions did not enter into the first mad confusion following the crime and when Norcross found that both Booth and Surratt had escaped the city, he left the task of following them to the hundreds who entered pursuit for the gain of reward.

During the night of April 14th, the lobby of the Willard was filled with men, grave faced, awaiting news from the little bedroom where the President of the United States lay unconscious while his physicians, his Cabinet and his minister prayed, his wife wept, and Washington waited, scarce daring to breathe.

For a time Honeycutt and Judge Laury tarried with the crowd, but as there seemed to be no news, they went to their rooms for a few hours rest.

Honeycutt was the first to hear the fatal news. Very early in the morning he returned to the lower floor. A hush seemed to pervade the place—an unaccountable silence, for the place was packed with men. When he had gone to his room a few hours before, all had been confusion. Now quiet reigned, low voices—whispers and silence—Honeycutt listened. Then he heard the words, "He is dead."

"Dead? Could the President be dead?"

Honeycutt stood on the stair in a dazed condition. It all seemed unreal—a fearful dream. A touch on his shoulder

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and a question brought him back to the time and place. It was Judge Laury.

“What news?” he asked.

“He—he—our President is—” Honeycutt’s voice grew husky. He seized the hand of Judge Laury and wrung it. “My friend—he is—”

“Not dead?” Judge Laury asked sharply.

“Dead,” and Honeycutt felt in his pocket for his handkerchief.

“Dead! Shot down in cold blood! My God, Honey, will the South be blamed for this crime?”

“The South? It should not be. Do you remember I told you before the war of a long time conspiracy? The war itself proved my contention. Now comes this cowardly assassination which is not the mere freak of a mad man or fanatic. The object of the crime was the life of the whole people—the life of the Republic itself!”

While they yet stood Norcross, worn and tired, joined them.

“Do you know anything?” Uncle Honey asked him.

“I have just come from there—talked with a man who was at the bedside. Stanton broke down and cried like a baby when, as he stood by the unconscious body of the President, General Barnes, after the examination, said, ‘The wound is mortal.’”

“Stanton—Stanton who hated Abraham Lincoln, who never referred to him in any other way than ‘That baboon’—Stanton weeping?”

“Stanton, yes—and it was Stanton who tenderly pressed the eyelids over the deep-set eyes, who drew the sheet up over the body and said in deep and kindly voice, ‘Now he belongs to the ages.’ That was Stanton.”

“Stanton? How could he do it?”

“Because when he came to know the soul of Abraham Lincoln, he could do no less. The President is dead but Seward will recover.”

“Seward—what happened to Seward?”

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“ Have you not heard? He was stabbed four times last night by a giant of a fellow named Payne—one of the conspirators. Grant was also marked for slaughter, but for some unknown reason took a sudden notion to leave the city.”

“ Wholesale conspiracy! Civil and ecclesiastical autocracy in action! And even now the Moving Hand will be kept well hidden, while the public like a mob after a mad dog will hunt the cat’s paw—the actor. Against the spawn and offspring of that autocracy whose forgotten mouthpiece was and is the Secret Treaty of Verona, let there be united and intelligent action. Though all the Lincolns of every age were slain, this will not satisfy the black forces aimed against the *liberties* of a *free people*. Let the Republic beware—beware! ”

“ Saturday, April 15th,” Norcross said, drawing a white envelope from his pocket. “ He is gone—Ann Leuin is not found! ”

CHAPTER X

GOD'S LINCOLN

THE joy Ann Leuin experienced was in a measure that of Father Chiniquy, also, as the two of them left the White House after the Mississippi girl's visit to President Lincoln, and as a special favor the priest had asked to accompany Ann Leuin when she should return on Saturday, April 15th, for like her he felt sure there would be joyful news.

So, while Ann Leuin counted the days as beads of inspiration are counted on a silver chain, Father Chiniquy also kept count of the passing time until the morning of April 15th, when shortly after seven o'clock, news of the assassination of the President reached him, coming while he sat at the breakfast table.

At first there was a rush of denial. It could not be! No hand had been lifted against the good Lincoln! Then the muscles of his throat contracted until he seemed choking. Invisible and cruel fingers caught the heart in so tight a grip the breath seemed being driven from his body. He left the table.

On the streets the confusion, the crying, the cursing of the night had given way to a silence that was settling like a pall—a pall whose borders were not to stop with those of a Nation, but would reach across seas and continents.

Involuntarily Father Chiniquy joined the throng moving toward the house where the President had died. Held back by the police, the throng waited with bowed heads and weeping. Two hours after his death, wrapped in an American flag, the body of the President was tenderly borne from the house on Tenth Street and carried through the strangely hushed and solemn streets to the White House. Workmen were already taking down the red and white and blue, replacing the garlands and buntings with black, and the flag that four years of war had not lowered, was now swinging

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at half mast while the low spoken directions to workmen were in sharp contrast to the shouting and singing of those who hung the victory colors so short a time before.

Easter Sunday!

Tears and the tolling of bells and the drooping of crape-bordered pennants!

One week before—one short week—just as the Sunday evening services were ending, bells in cities and towns began ringing the glad news that the day was at hand which North and South alike had prayed for with soul travail. In the larger cities iron-throated cannon thundered the news. Hundreds of guns told the jubilant tidings, while bonfire flames on streets and rockets blazed against the sky and the shouts and singing of the people helped to break the usual quiet of a Sunday night. On the morrow the rejoicing was renewed with ten times added vigor. Bells pealed until it seemed their throats would be broken asunder. Cannon roared. Guns boomed. Ten thousand voices shouted. Everybody met his neighbor with mingled laughter and tears. Flags floated not only on house tops and steeples and spires, but from windows and wagons, from carriages and car roofs, and men wore them in their buttonholes and women on their hats. The air was filled with the sound of martial music mingled with men's voices shouting patriotic tunes. Courts adjourned, banks closed, post offices shut up, schools dismissed, business suspended and the people gave themselves up to an abandon of thanksgiving and rejoicing. Everywhere processions were formed measuring sometimes miles in length. Blue coated soldiers marched to glorious music, horses with proudly arched necks stepped high; drays, fire engines, express wagons, omnibuses—every conceivable kind of conveyance rolled into line loaded with men and boys ringing bells, beating drums, blowing trumpets and fifes and every kind of instrument and over the broad land was heard by voice and band and trumpet the victory song, "Glory, glory hallelujah!"

From the heights of this exultation and wild rejoicing

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the nation was precipitated by one swift downward stroke to the depths of black despair, and the great joy that had come to the war-weary Nation was submerged by overwhelming sorrow—was forgotten in the presence of a calamity appalling. The air was solemn with the tolling of bells while minute guns reverberated from valley to hill, from mountain to mountain and across the continent. Towns and villages and cities were draped with black. Churches were thronged with men and women who sat with bowed heads weeping. Never in all man's history had the truth of the poem the dear President loved best, been made such vivid reality—

“And the smile and the tear, the song and the dirge
Still follow each other like surge upon surge.”

It was on this black shrouded Easter day Father Chiniquy sought Ann Leuin. All Saturday while she had kept her room unnerved as if there remained nothing more to live for, the priest had walked the streets as one might pass up and down and to and fro in a strange land.

“Dear, good Father Chiniquy,” Ann Leuin exclaimed when she met him, “I am so glad you have come. I wondered if you had forgotten—forgotten—” She paused to steady her voice. “I am not going to cry. But yesterday—you know yesterday was—”

“Yes, yes my child—I know yesterday—ten o'clock it was to have been. Weep, child—weep if you will. Why not? The heart of the Republic bleeds. A nation weeps as it has never known weeping, like Rachel, not to be comforted.”

“I think I can never shed another tear. Why—oh why, Father, did God let it happen? Why—why?”

“Your question is the same the millions of our land are asking. God alone knows His inscrutable ways. Let us not lose faith in God. Let us thank Him that it was our joy, our eternal blessing to have known Abraham Lincoln. As to the crime of it—ah, ‘Vengeance is mine’ says the liv-

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ing God, 'I will repay!' I have come to ask if I may be of service—if you would like to go with me to pay your last respects to our beloved President."

"Father—dear, Father Chiniquy—don't ask me. I cannot. To look in his eyes, to hear his voice, to feel the touch of his hand—just now it seems it would be like coming in touch with God himself. But to look on that sad face asleep in death—those kind eyes closed forever, those big, warm hands folded cold and stiff over a heart that surely never hated. I cannot—I cannot!"

"No—no. Nor would opportunity be given. True he will lie in state at the White House and afterward at the Capitol and thousands will throng his bier, but none will look upon his face for the catafalque is high and well guarded. It is not to see him—rather to be near his body as in loving remembrance. And if by any chance his immortal spirit should be hovering near, would it not please him think you, to know the little girl from Mississippi appreciated what he was doing for her, enough to pass his bier with the mourning throng?"

"Yes—yes—! Of course I will go."

"We will go together then for the throng will be great and you are alone."

"Alone—alone," Ann Leuin repeated and in spite of her promise not to cry, she sobbed.

"Forgive me. It was a mistake. You are not alone—God is with you. Surely you can trust Him. Perhaps He may even finish the plan just now made abortive by an assassin's bullet. Who knows?"

"Who knows? Who knows?" and as Ann Leuin repeated the words her mind, for a moment, went back to St. Aloysius and Mrs. Surratt.

The seemingly endless throng that passed the bier of the President was made up of every kind of men and women, soldiers in blue, some in grey; officers of rank, civilians, statesmen, foreigners, negroes, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers. Here too was the blind man whose fear of death

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had been taken away by the strange sayings of the big nurse who wrote poetry; here too was the nurse—the poet to whose mind as he paused beside the bier came words which were to form themselves into the epic of a Nation's loss.

“Captain, my Captain! Our fearful trip is done;
The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we
sought is won.
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people
all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim
and daring;
But oh, heart! heart! heart!
Oh, the bleeding drops of red
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.”

Not far from where the blind man stood, a priest and a young girl stopped. Pale faced she lifted her tear dimmed eyes to the catafalque on which rested the black bier—black—black—black as the front of Ford's Theatre—black as the dome of the Capitol—black as the sorrow of the Nation—black as the crime behind the criminal.

But even against the black, the American flag hung its glorious stars and stripes. In each of the four corners handsome groups of three were half draped and around the catafalque there was starry drapery, golden emblems and the Eagle.

“If I could only see his face once more—once more,” the girl sobbed.

The blind man had moved nearer. “You have seen that face?” he asked.

“Once—only once.”

“It is enough. You will see it always—always, even beside the throne of God—for he too is a savior—the savior of the Union.”

“You speak truly. He gave his life that ‘the government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth’ and *this is the seal*,” and the priest who was speaking stretched a long arm under the shadow

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of the canopy and pointed a steady forefinger to the still heart.

"Amen! Amen!" sobbed the tearless blind man.

The solemn, clear voice of the priest had drawn the attention of those about. One man who turned his eyes to see who had spoken wore a Confederate uniform with an empty sleeve pinned across his breast.

From the face and figure of the big priest the eyes of the man in grey fell on the girl who stood by his side.

Scarce a moment later the one good grey arm was around the girl, her face was against the empty sleeve and she was sobbing, "Oh, Father—Father—I know it now. Mammy was right. Her white soul knew! He was—he IS God's Lincoln!"

"Yes—yes," the Confederate said, choking. "Yes—yes."

"Father, dear Father—why did this happen? He was good—he was kind—he was going to find—going to find for me—"

With the words unfinished Ann Leuin raised her handkerchief and covered her eyes.

In that moment Honeycutt and Norcrosse, who had been left behind when Judge Laury saw his daughter, came beside him.

The face of the younger man paled and then flushed as his eyes sought those of Judge Laury inquiringly.

Judge Laury nodded and in low voice said, "She is yours—take her," and he removed his arm of grey to make place for the one in blue.

The exchange of arms was momentary and easy. But there was a different pressure, a fierce and penetrating vibration in the blue arm different from that of paternal love.

Thrusting her handkerchief aside with a quick move, Ann Leuin raised her eyes to meet those of Del Norcrosse.

"Amen!" again said the blind man whose eyes could not shed tears. "Amen! Amen!"

